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ABSTRACT

This annual journal contains nine articles dealing with business education in Louisiana and elsewhere. The articles "Word Processing Competencies: Which Ones Are Really Necessary?" (Patricia Lynn Anderson, Mary Alice Griffin) and "English Basics Were Developed in Shorthand--Why Not in Keyboarding?" (Clora Mae Baker, Marcia A. Anderson-Yates, Grace Abolaji) report studies conducted in Georgia and Illinois, respectively. "National Business and Education Skills Standards: Does Business Education Need Them?" (Phyllis C. Bunn) explores the implications of implementing national skill standards. The articles "Active Learning Techniques for Use in the Vocational Education Classroom" (Donna Holmquist) and "E-Mail Principles that Business Teachers Should Include in Their Curriculum" (Marcia L. James, Robert M. Schramm) both provide practical suggestions for classroom teachers. The need for students to understand other cultures is emphasized in "Technology and International Communication" (M. Latif Javed). The articles "Using Teams in Business Communication Classes" (Laura MacLeod, Sandra J. Nelson) and "Enhancing Computer Simulations through Consensual Business Problem-Solving Formats: Impacts of Student Diversity upon Learning Outcomes" (James L. Morrison) present ideas for classroom projects. "Expanding Business Education Programs: Providing a School-Within-a-School" (Rita Thomas Noel) describes one North Carolina business teacher's efforts to improve business education. Several papers contain substantial bibliographies. (MN)

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EDITOR'S NOTES . . .

The manuscripts presented in this issue were accepted under a blind review process, with each manuscript being read by three reviewers from the Journal's editorial review board.

This fourth issue of your Journal contains articles on a wide variety of topics, beginning with a study conducted by Patricia Lynn Anderson and Mary Alice Griffin that identifies the word processing competencies most frequently used by office personnel in the automated office. Next, Clora Mae Baker, Marcia A. Anderson-Yates, and Grace Abolaji's experimental research study provides the justification for integrating English skills exercises with beginning keyboarding instruction at the secondary level.

Phyllis C. Bunn's article addresses the questions and factors that must be considered before a system of industry-based skill standards can be achieved and coordinated with business education programs. Those of us who are interested in adding more excitement to our teaching, may want to consider Donna Holmquist's suggestions for using active learning techniques.

As technology continues to impact the business education curriculum, Marcia L. James and Robert M. Schramm offer four basic teaching principles which can be used when presenting information on how e-mail affects the individual and the organization. A second article on the impact of technology is by M. Latif Javed, who examines the relationship between technology and international communications and discusses the implications for business education.

To help students gain teamwork skills, Laura MacLeod and Sandra J. Nelson share ideas on the composition, selections, and evaluation of teams to help instructors coordinate team activities and assignments. Next, James L.

Morrison addresses the impact of student diversity upon learning outcomes during computer simulation activities. The last article, that of Rita Thomas Noel, describes the efforts a high school business teacher to expand the business education program by starting a school-within-a-school.

Sincere thanks is extended to all authors for their professional contributions to this issue. Appreciation also is extended to the editorial review board and associate editors, Julie Bourgeois and Theresa Zimmer. Acknowledgement must be given to Sandra Cash of Louisiana State University for her patience in keying the Journal and to Carol Blanchard who performed various tasks necessary for publishing your journal. Sincere appreciation goes to our advertisers for their support. Finally, I want to provide a thanks to Becky Tassin who provided her expertise as a proofreader.

Donna H. Redmann, Editor

JOURNAL PROFILE

Journal Description

The Louisiana Business Education Journal is published annually by the Louisiana Association of Business Educators. This refereed journal includes articles on various aspects of business education dealing with research, theory, trends and issues, curriculum, teaching methodology, technology, and personal/ professional development. Each issue contains approximately six to ten articles, as well as, abstracts of doctoral dissertations and master's theses completed by Louisiana business educators. The first issue of the journal was circulated in Spring 1991.

Circulation/Readership

The journal is distributed to all LABE members as part of membership dues and sent free of charge to the NABTE (National Association of Business Teacher Education) institutions throughout the country. The LABE membership is comprised of business teachers, administrators, supervisors, teacher educators, college and university students planning to become business teachers, and those interested in business education. Membership is concentrated at the secondary level.

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CALL FOR PAPERS

The Louisiana Association of Business Educators invites business educators to contribute articles for publication in the Louisiana Business Education Journal, a refereed publication. Manuscripts should deal with topics of interest to educators at both the secondary and post-secondary levels. Submission of manuscripts dealing with practical topics are encouraged, as are research based or theoretical papers. Abstracts of doctoral dissertations and master's theses completed by Louisiana business educators are welcomed. Occasionally, invited authors' papers will be published.

Manuscripts will be selected through a blind review process. Manuscripts should not have been published or be under current consideration for publication by another journal. Five copies of the manuscript, including a title page and a 50-100 word abstract, should be submitted to the editor. The manuscripts should range from 6 to 12 double-spaced typed pages of 12-pitch type size, including tables and references. Manuscripts must be prepared using the style format in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Fourth Edition, 1994 (ISBN 1-55798-241-4). The title page is to include the title of the manuscript and the running header. The following information on each author needs to be included on the title page: full name, position title, place of employment, city, state, zip code, telephone numbers, and e-mail address (if available).

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Dr. Donna Redmann, Editor
Louisiana Business Education Journal
School of Vocational Education
Louisiana State University
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Louisiana Business Education Journal
Vol. 4, No. 1, 1994

WORD PROCESSING COMPETENCIES: WHICH ONES ARE REALLY NECESSARY?

Patricia Lynn Anderson
Mary Alice Griffin

Abstract

This study was performed to identify the word processing competencies most frequently used by office personnel in the automated office. Respondents were asked to rate 47 word processing competencies as to their importance in performing daily office tasks. The most important word processing competencies identified are located in Edit/Revise/Change and Document Formatting functional categories. The majority of the least important competencies fell within the Advanced Features category. WordPerfect is still considered the most frequently used word processing package, and the typewriter is still frequently utilized in most offices in South Georgia.

Patricia Lynn Anderson is an Associate Professor in the Department of Vocational Education at Valdosta State University, Valdosta, Georgia.

Mary Alice Griffin is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Vocational Education at Valdosta State University, Valdosta, Georgia.

In the last decade, computers and word processing software have resulted in drastic changes in how the office worker processes information. Office workers must have computer expertise to be competitive in the job market.

Classroom teachers who have been given the responsibility of preparing students for the workplace have a major challenge to meet. That challenge is to ensure that their students have the computer competencies, such as word processing, to meet the ever-changing workplace.

Statement of the Problem

To prepare individuals for entry-level office positions that require word processing skills, educators must have valid criteria for determining what competencies should be included in the course curricula. These criteria must be continuously re-evaluated in light of the rapid advancements in computer information processing as well as the continual upgrading and introduction of new word processing software. The problem of this study was to identify the word processing competencies most frequently used by office personnel in the automated office.

Methods and Procedures

The survey instrument developed for this study consisted of a listing of 47 word processing competencies divided into five functional categories. The five categories were: document formatting; edit/revise/change; advanced features; document printing; and utilities/maintenance. The competencies selected for use in the survey resulted from a review of several nationally known word processing textbooks and a study published in the NABTE Review (Bertelson, 1990). In addition to completing the instrument, respondents were asked to supply data on size of company, type of organization,

software and hardware usage, and whether a typewriter is still being utilized at their company.

The sample population for this study consisted of 214 companies located in South Georgia. The companies were randomly selected from lists provided by local chambers of commerce. Each company was contacted and given a brief explanation of the study. All respondents agreed to participate, and personal interviews were conducted to complete the survey. This resulted in a 100 percent response rate.

The data obtained from the returned questionnaires were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, Release 3.0 (SPSS-PC+). Mean scores of the competencies, number of responses, and frequencies and percentages of demographic data were used to present statistics collected in the study. Each competency was evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale with 5 representing extremely important and 1 representing not required. For analysis purposes, the following ranges in mean scores were used: extremely important (5.0-4.20), important (4.19-3.40), not exceedingly important (3.39-2.60), not essential (2.59-1.80), and not important (1.79-1.00).

Results

An analysis of the 214 questionnaires returned by the respondents resulted in the following demographic profile for this study:

Type of Organization

Sales/Service	60%
Manufacturing	11%
Education	29%

Size of Organization

Small (0-25 employees)	45%
Medium (26-100 employees)	23%
Large (101 + employees)	32%

As evidenced by the data, the majority of the participants of the study are employed in South Georgia in small, sales/service organizations.

The results of the study indicated that 19 of the 47 competencies (45 percent) were ranked as extremely important (mean scores falling within the 5.0-4.20 range) or important (mean scores falling within the 4.19-3.40 range). Table 1 presents the 19 competencies.

Table 1

Word Processing Competencies Rated by Respondents as Extremely Important or Important

Ranking	Word Processing Competency	Mean Score
1	Print a document from the screen	4.54
2	Delete text	4.46
3	Set margins	4.40
4	Use spell checker	4.34
5	Copy text	4.28
6	Insert text	4.28
7	Set tabs	4.20
8	Move text	4.16
9	Print a document from a disk	4.13
10	Use underlining	4.05
11	Use boldfacing	4.03
12	Adjust line spacing	3.99
13	Use indent function	3.97
14	Center text vertically	3.84
15	Use overstrike mode (typeover)	3.83

Table 1 continued

Ranking	Word Processing Competency	Mean Score
16	Use search/replace feature	3.53
17	Change fonts/size	3.50
18	Activate page numbering	3.48
19	Insert hard page breaks	3.45

Of these 19 competencies, 8 (42 percent) were listed under the Document Formatting functional category. However, only two of these competencies, setting margins and setting tabs, were considered extremely important. These two competencies are basic to any document formatting and are normally required when an individual is initially inputting a document. Six of the 19 competencies (32 percent) were from the Edit/Revise/Change category. The ranking of the 47 word processing competencies by functional category appears in Table 2.

Table 2

Ranking of Competencies by Functional Category

Word Processing Competency	Mean Score
Document Formatting	
Set margins	4.40
Set tabs	4.20
Use underlining	4.05
Use boldfacing	4.03
Adjust line spacing	3.99
Use indent function	3.97
Center text vertically	3.84
Insert hard page breaks	3.45
Change justification	3.26
Add print enhancements	3.24

Table 2 Continued

Word Processing Competency	Mean Score
Use flush right alignment	2.89
Activate widow/orphan feature	2.56
Create hanging characters	2.34
Edit/Revise/Change	
Delete text	4.46
Copy text	4.28
Insert text	4.28
Move text	4.16
Use overstrike mode (typeover)	3.83
Use search/replace feature	3.53
Use hyphenation	3.07
Advanced Features	
Use spell checker	4.34
Change fonts/size	3.50
Activate page numbering	3.48
Merge text	3.38
Use thesaurus	3.32
Create different page types/sizes	3.15
Create headers and footers	3.08
Use grammar checker	3.02
Create tables using table feature	2.78
Create and invoke macros	2.74
Use sort and select	2.73
Import graphics into document	2.39
Use math feature	2.37
Activate conditional end of page	2.33
Use table of contents/index feature	2.32
Use footnote and endnotes	2.25
Create graphic lines	2.23
Use equation feature	2.17
Create parallel-type text	2.06
Create newspaper-style text	2.05
Use scanner to import graphics	1.93

Table 2 Continued

Word Processing Competency	Mean Score
Document Printing	
Print a document from the screen	4.54
Print a document from a disk	4.13
Print labels	3.37
Print envelopes	3.32
Utilities/Maintenance	
Work with setup menu	3.23
Perform disk directory maintenance	3.14

The respondents of the study ranked 12 of the 47 word processing competencies (26 percent) as not essential (mean scores falling with the 2.59-1.80 range). These competencies appear in reverse order of importance in Table 3. No competencies were in the not important (means scores falling within the 1.79-1.0 range). This might be the result of these options not being utilized on a daily basis in most job settings. These specialized features would tend to be used by a specific profession. For example, the equation option would be used by science and mathematics fields. In addition, some of the terminology used in the survey may not have been understood by the respondents; therefore, it caused the competency to be ranked lower. For example, the term "widow/orphan" is often not linked with the concept of dividing paragraphs appropriately. In addition, the competencies ranked as not essential appeared to fall within the more specialized options available in some word processing packages. Ten of the 12 competencies (83 percent) fell within the Advanced Features category (refer to Table 2).

Table 3

Word Processing Competencies Rated by Respondents as Not Essential

Ranking	Word Processing Competency	Mean Score
1	Use scanner to import graphics	1.93
2	Create newspaper-style text	2.05
3	Create parallel-type text	2.06
4	Use equation feature	2.17
5	Create graphic lines	2.23
6	Use footnote and endnotes	2.25
7	Use table of contents/index feature	2.32
8	Activate conditional end of page	2.33
9	Create hanging characters	2.34
10	Use math features	2.37
11	Import graphics into document	2.39
12	Activate widow/orphan feature	2.56

Tables 4 through 7 present the data related to the software and hardware questions asked of the respondents. The results of the South Georgia study found that WordPerfect was the word processing software of choice. These results were substantiated by a national survey (Leland, 1992). Leland's survey indicated that 81 percent of the employers were seeking applicants who possessed WordPerfect skills. Table 4 presents the results of the questions dealing with percentage of respondents utilizing word processing software.

Table 4

What Word Processing Program Do You Use?

Program	Frequency	Percentage
WordPerfect	145	67.8
Other	27	12.6
Word	9	4.2
Professional Write	9	4.2
Wordstar	8	3.7
No Response	6	2.8
Microsoft Works	5	2.3
First Choice	4	1.9
Memomaker	1	.5

The respondents were also asked to list what type of spreadsheet software they were utilizing. Although the majority of the respondents did not indicate a preference, Lotus 1-2-3 was indicated as the software used most frequently by choice. Leland (1992) also found that Lotus 1-2-3 was the preferred spreadsheet program (95 percent).

The respondents indicated that dBase was the program of choice. Again, the majority of the respondents did not give a preference. The results of this question regarding database usage appears in Table 6.

In response to the question dealing with which graphics program was currently being used, the respondents indicated that WordPerfect was the software of preference. The majority of the respondents did not respond to this software question. As the results of our study suggested, the use of graphics as a word processing competency was considered not

essential for use and could be the reason for such a low usage in this category. Table 7 presents this information.

The respondents indicated that the use of a typewriter was still widely used on the job. Of the 214 respondents, 174 or 81 percent said that the typewriter was used in performing some facet of their job. The type of computer most frequently found in the office, as reported by the study's respondents, was an IBM clone (169 or 79 percent). A majority of the respondents (165 or 77 percent) said that they did not use the software package Windows; the choice was still DOS.

Table 5

What Spreadsheet Program Do You Use?

Program	Frequency	Percentage
No Response	120	56.0
Lotus	50	23.4
Other	11	5.1
Quattro-Pro	10	4.7
Works	6	2.8
Lotus Works	4	1.9
Excel	4	1.9
Customized Package	3	1.4
First Choice	3	1.4
Symphony	3	1.4

Table 6

What Database Program Do You Use?

Program	Frequency	Percentage
No Response	150	70.1
D-Base	21	9.8
PC-File	16	7.5
Customized Package	8	3.7
Works	7	3.3
Paradox	4	1.9
Reflex	3	1.4
Lotus Works	2	.9
First Choice	2	.9
Fox Pro	1	.5

Table 7

What Graphics Program Do You Use?

Program	Frequency	Percentage
No Response	164	76.6
WordPerfect	18	8.4
Print Shop	10	4.7
Other	8	3.8
Harvard Graphics	8	3.7
First Choice	2	.9
Lotus Works	2	.9
Works	1	.5
Lotus	1	.5

Conclusions

Overall, the most important word processing competencies were located in Edit/Revise/Change and Document Formatting categories. The majority of the least important competencies fell within the Advanced Features category. WordPerfect was the most frequently used word processing package, and the typewriter was still widely utilized in most offices. IBM compatible computers were the major type of hardware being used in the business environment of South Georgia. Although the computer software industry is highly promoting Windows, the DOS operating system was still the operating system used by the study's respondents.

Recommendations

The current study has demonstrated that there are different levels of importance placed on word processing competencies by office personnel. Although the study examined the businesses located in South Georgia, the results of the study can still be applied to other regions of the country with similar demographics. For areas of the country that do not coincide with the demographics of South Georgia, the study could be replicated to determine if there are any differences. However, the general recommendations that follow are based on the findings of this study and can be used as suggested guidelines for future research and for implementing changes in current educational curricula (secondary and post-secondary levels).

1. Since the office environment is constantly changing, it is recommended that periodic studies be conducted relative to frequency of usage of word processing competencies by office personnel. The study should include a section where the respondents can indicate any future changes in office technology usage or acquisition of software and hardware. By doing this type of research, business educators can

evaluate their curricula to ensure that the subject matter that they teach is relevant.

2. Since basic document entry is still the primary task performed by office personnel, it is recommended that secondary school word processing teachers place their primary emphasis on document formatting and edit/revise/change features in their classroom activities. Multiple exercises should be used to reinforce each word processing concept. Teachers at the post-secondary level should also place a great deal of emphasis on the instruction of edit/revise/change and document formatting features; if time permits, include instruction in the advanced features which require the use of higher-level problem-solving skills.

3. Since the study's results indicate that a high percentage of offices still use a typewriter to perform some functions of business, it is recommended that some typewriters still be maintained in a classroom setting for instructional purposes.

4. It is recommended that institutions periodically survey the business community that they are servicing to ascertain what types of hardware are being utilized so that instruction can be geared toward learning the necessary skills to operate the equipment.

5. Since there is a continuing dispute over which is the preferred operating system (DOS or Windows), it is recommended that a periodic study be performed in your service region to determine the status of this preference debate. With the outcome of the survey, programs can be tailored to meet the community's needs.

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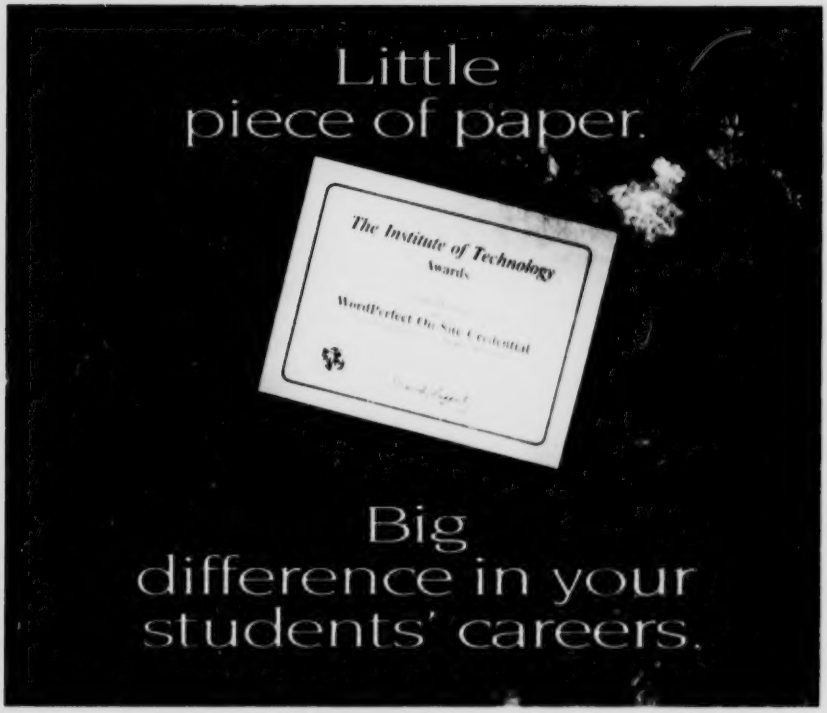

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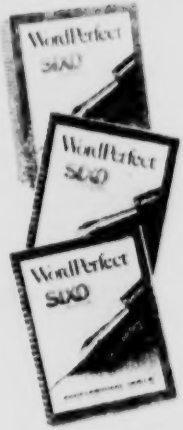

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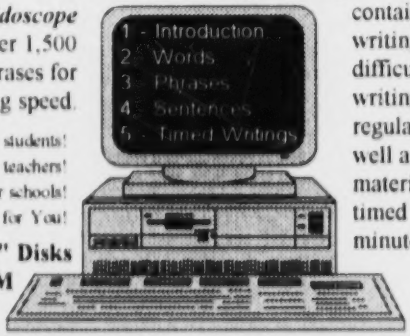

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Louisiana Business Education Journal
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ENGLISH BASICS WERE DEVELOPED IN SHORTHAND--WHY NOT IN KEYBOARDING?

Clora Mae Baker
Marcia A. Anderson-Yates
Grace Abolaji

Abstract

This study focused on the English basics development of 1,025 students enrolled in beginning keyboarding classes in 19 southern Illinois high schools. Classes were randomly assigned to either control or experimental status. Students in both groups were taught using the same textbooks, but the experimental group, in addition, received concentrated basic English skill instruction 3 times per week for 8 weeks using 22 exercises with 400 practice sentences developed by the researchers. A 40-question pre/posttest was developed, pilot-tested with a Cronbach alpha of .94, and administered to both groups at the beginning and end of a 16-week semester. Study results indicated a statistically significant difference in the experimental group's achievement in basic English skills of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization over the control group's scores. Recommendations included emphasis on an integrated English/keyboarding curriculum.

Clora Mae Baker is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Workforce Education and Development at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.

Marcia A. Anderson-Yates is an Associate Professor in the Department of Workforce Education and Development at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.

Grace Abolaji is a Post-doctoral Researcher in the Department of Workforce Education and Development at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.

Among various crises facing education today is the increasing demand from members of society at large, as well as from employers, for a return to the basics in English. When groups demand return to the basics in English, exactly what do they mean? Does it mean that students merely take more courses offered by an English department regardless of course content? Or is the demand for something quite specific? Is not society today really demanding the same basic skill in English that employers are demanding--the ability to spell; to punctuate; to differentiate among homonyms; to correctly divide words whether it is in longhand or at a keyboard; to have verbs agree with their subjects; to have pronouns agree with their antecedents; to understand appropriate sentence structure, etc. These are the basic skills that society is requesting, and these are the basic skills that employers demand (Condon & Schlattman, 1986). For business educators throughout the years, shorthand was a business course offering that attempted to satisfy this demand for basic English skills.

Lewis (1991) maintained that traditional ways of organizing curriculum are failing many students. For example, business educators have historically presented the occupational argument that taking keyboarding in high school prepares workers for employment. It was only recently that the argument was extended to those students who need the technical keyboarding skill as part of their academic education. Furthermore, Lewis (1994), citing Craighead (1984) and Grierson (1985), indicated that "this second argument has revolved around the growing importance of computer literacy and the need for such skills as the portal of entry for such literacy" (p. 29). Lost in most of these discussions, and largely unexamined in recent empirical literature, has been any systematic examination of the impact of keyboarding instruction on secondary students' English skill development.

Need for the Study

Employers have long recognized that secretaries possessing the shorthand skill are better at grammar, spelling, and punctuation than secretaries who do not know shorthand. Johnson's (1975) research confirmed that shorthand students were significantly better than non-shorthand students in the areas of punctuation, spelling, vocabulary, capitalization, reading comprehension, and word usage. He recommended that "language arts teachers encourage the learning of language arts in disciplines other than formal English class" (Johnson, 1975). Daily drills in English basics to accomplish transcription objectives in shorthand resulted in students being able to apply grammar, spelling, and punctuation rules. Shorthand instruction was marketed based on the knowledge that it influenced English basics.

Early research focused on the implications for typewriting instruction in the language arts, and much of this research indicated that the typewriter could be used in helping students "learn how to learn." Although research on keyboarding at the elementary school level has been consistent in recent years (Sormunen, 1990, 1993; Sowers, 1989), few studies have focused on the topic of English skill development and keyboarding at the secondary level during the past 25-30 years. Up until this time, typewriting textbooks have superficially addressed English skills (grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization) with little emphasis on systematically building those skills through continuous reinforcement activities. Nor has any research attention been given to systematically integrating keyboarding instruction with English instruction.

Problem and Research Questions

The research problem was: Does completion of a secondary-level introductory keyboarding course with special

emphasis on English skill exercises influence students' English skills development? The research question was: Is there a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups' English exam posttest score after statistically controlling for their pretest score?

Related Literature Review

Authors expound the absolute need for business personnel to be highly competent in grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. Ober (1984) noted that no matter how competent a student's typing skills, a student who cannot follow standard rules of grammar and style will not be successful in the office. Davis and Gonzenbach (1986) quoted Morrison (1985) who said that "a thorough mastery of grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and the use of rules for writing numbers . . . as well as sentence structure and parallel construction is absolutely necessary" (p. 17). The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (1991) identified writing as part of the Basic Skills Foundation which represents "the irreducible minimum for anyone who wants to get even a low-skill job. They will not guarantee a career or access to a college education, but their absence will ensure that the door of opportunity remains closed" (p. 17).

A long history of research evidence (Toppe, 1991) suggests that proper instruction in keyboarding skills can improve students' reading, language composition, spelling, vocabulary, creative writing, and proofreading. Connecting English skills development and typewriting instruction received research attention beginning some 60 years ago when Wood and Freeman (1932) conducted an extensive and rigorous study of utilizing the portable typewriter at the elementary school level. They found consistent evidence that the typewriter's influence on spelling was more favorable than on any other subject tested.

Studies by Kauzer (1942), Erickson and Clow (1959), Balcziak (1960), Davis, (1960), Hansen (1963), Featheringham (1965), Krevolin (1970), Byford (1971), and Reutten (1976), were among others indicating typewriting instruction had positive effects on language arts skills. Bartholome's research (1968) provided clear evidence that the drills designed and used in his experiment did increase students' spelling ability. Brendel (1963) and Kiley (1970) both agreed with Lockwood (1961) who asked, "Should we not aim to increase the language ability of our students by the use of the typewriter as an educational tool?" (p. 19).

As a result of national longitudinal research, Lewis (1991) suggested that it is probably the minimal skills in keyboarding taken as a part of academic education, rather than advanced competencies in word processing, which contribute to success in labor markets and college attendance.

Research Procedure

Subjects

The subjects for the study were 1,243 students enrolled in beginning semester-long keyboarding classes taught by 22 instructors at 19 southern Illinois high schools. Once approvals to conduct the research were received from teachers, administrators, and a human subjects research approval committee, the 22 keyboarding instructors and their classes were randomly assigned to either control or experimental status. Therefore, once teachers agreed to participate in the study, they also agreed to conduct the class according to the assigned research group status. All instructors used an introductory keyboarding textbook published by South-Western Publishing Company.

Instrumentation

A 40-question pretest/posttest instrument covering spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar (word usage) was developed by adapting the PSI Basic Skills Test (1981), a test designed for adults entering clerical employment. Recognizing that the intact Basic Skills Test was inappropriate for secondary student assessment, the test's format was used with revised questions. The instrument was pilot tested using 41 high school students not in the research groups. Using the Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient, the instrument's internal reliability was calculated at .94.

Data Gathering Procedures

Students in both the control and experimental groups took the English skills pretest during the first week of keyboarding instruction and completed a basic personal demographic data form. Students in the control group received keyboarding instruction by completing daily textbook lessons as identified by each instructor. Experimental group students were taught keyboarding in a similar manner to the control group, but teachers integrated extra instruction in basic English skills for 8 weeks after students had learned the keyboard.

Supplemental English exercises, developed by the researchers, were sent to experimental group teachers who were instructed to spend about 10 minutes every alternate day for 8 weeks discussing rules and examples of English use, punctuation, spelling, and capitalization. The 22 lessons included 4 on capitalization, 6 on punctuation, 5 on word usage, 5 on spelling and 2 periodic reviews designed as reinforcement exercises. These lessons and the 400 corresponding practice sentences paralleled shorthand transcription drills through focus on specific English skill components. During the last week of the semester, teachers of both groups administered the posttest.

Data Analysis

Posttest scores were matched with pretest scores. Some students' pretest/posttest results could not be used because of incorrect identification coding or missing data. As a result, 506 sets of student data were used for the experimental group, and 519 sets of data were used for the control group, or a total of 1,025 subjects.

Using SAS, Version 6.07, analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to statistically analyze the research question used in this study. Data were first tested to determine if a significant relationship existed between pretest and posttest scores with a resulting correlation of .77475 which was significant at the .0001 alpha level. The second step of the ANCOVA test identified that the interaction effect between pretest scores and the group (control and experimental) was not significant at the .05 level ($f = 1.39$, $p = .2386$) proving that regression lines were parallel. Having assured that the correlation between pretest and posttest was significant and that regression lines were parallel, the research question in the ANCOVA could be tested.

Findings

Demographic Data

Subjects included 575 (56.4%) females and 444 (43.6%) males. Table 1 shows that among the ethnic groups represented by subjects, over 90% were white.

Table 1

Ethnic Background of Student Subjects

Race	Frequency	%
Asian	15	1.5
Black	44	4.4
Hispanic	6	0.6
White	946	93.5
Total	1,011	100.0

Note: Frequency Missing = 14

Data in Table 2 reveal that subjects were enrolled primarily in grades 9 and 10 (74.8%).

Table 2

Grade Level of Student Subjects

Grade	Frequency	%
9	408	40.1
10	353	34.7
11	161	15.8
12	96	9.4
Total	1,018	100.0

Note: Frequency Missing = 7

Results of Statistical Analysis

Pretest and posttest score means and standard deviations for both the control and experimental groups are presented in Tables 3 and 4. Control group score means (Table 3) for the pretest was 17.94 (lowest score was 3 and highest score was 35) and 19.08 for the posttest (lowest score was 5 and highest score was 37).

Table 3

Control Group Means and Standard Deviations

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviations	Lowest Score	Highest Score
Pretest	519	17.94	5.98	3.00	35.00
Posttest	519	19.08	6.34	5.00	37.00

Table 4 shows the experimental group score mean for the pretest was 19.04 (lowest score was 5; highest score was 37) and 20.97 for the posttest (lowest score was 5; highest score was 38).

A statistically significant difference between the experimental and control group was found on experimental group student posttest scores after statistically controlling for their pretest scores at the .05 alpha level (F value = 786.46; pr > .0001).

Table 4

Experimental Group Means and Standard Deviations

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviations	Lowest Score	Highest Score
Pretest	506	19.04	6.18	5.00	37.00
Posttest	506	20.97	6.43	5.00	38.00

Conclusions and Discussion

Study findings support the conclusion that when English basic skills are emphasized during one semester of keyboarding instruction at the secondary school level, students perform at a statistically significant higher level on an English skill exam than when English skills are not emphasized. This was the result after emphasizing English basics for only 10 minutes every other day for 8 weeks. Even though the experimental group outperformed the control group by only a difference of two points, that difference was statistically significant. Whether that two-point difference has a practical significance can only be answered through longitudinal research in which such English skills are integrated in keyboarding throughout the secondary school experience.

For years, business teachers developed English skills in shorthand classes through drill on specific English skill components needed for accurate shorthand transcription. As a result, those students consistently performed better on English basics than non-shorthand students. Why? In shorthand classes students had to know the reasons for every punctuation mark in the sentence, as well as the correct tense

of every verb. They also had to identify proper sentence construction and paragraph development.

Since 1930, research relating to integration of English skills in keyboarding/typewriting has shown improvement in student English skill development. Yet, there has been virtually no effort to more closely align English and keyboarding instruction. One has to question why the profession has chosen to ignore earlier research.

Virtually all of life's activities today involve an interplay of critical thinking, effective communication, and technical manipulations. The notion that one can be a totally educated individual by studying an array of isolated, unrelated courses separated from each other by departmental lines is a notion that is unfounded and ought to be put to rest. The idea that a liberal education and a technical education are separate, divergent, and antithetical is totally unrealistic. The only way to serve the needs of the modern student is to look for points at which the liberal education and the vocational education converge and to form syntheses that are relevant, appropriate, and accountable to the demands of society (Condon & Schlattman, 1986).

Future research should focus on the total elementary/secondary/postsecondary curriculum for integrating English skill development with keyboarding adding the composition component for document creation. Preparing citizens who can spell, use grammar correctly, capitalize, punctuate, with the technical keyboarding skill and document creation skill is the ultimate goal for satisfying all workforce needs.

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NATIONAL BUSINESS AND EDUCATION SKILLS STANDARDS: DOES BUSINESS EDUCATION NEED THEM?

Phyllis C. Bunn

Abstract

Through mandates of the Carl Perkins Applied Technology Act of 1990, education in the United States is working to establish a system of standards: program standards, student performance standards, and occupational skills standards. Matching funds for voluntary Federal grants have been awarded to establish national skills standards in various occupational clusters, excluding office occupations. The question thus arises: Are national skills standards needed in office occupations to assure business education students success in their transition to work?

Ms. Phyllis C. Bunn is a Doctoral Student at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University at Blacksburg, Virginia.

As the international marketplace demands quality, timeliness, and customization in producing goods and services, increasing importance is being placed on the skills of individual workers. Thus, while it is important to prepare new workers, improving schools for today's and tomorrow's students is not enough to assure an American workforce that will be globally competitive. Nearly 85% of America's workers for the year 2000 are in the workforce today. And of that number, an estimated 25 million of today's workers need to update their skills to keep pace with the changing economy and technology (Office of Work-Based Learning, 1992). Because of the need to train and retrain American workers, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990 (Perkins Act) (1990) and the proposed Goals 2000: Educate America Act legislation (U.S. Congress H.R. 1804, 1993) authorize the development of national business and education skills standards (industry-based skills standards and certification).

Vocational educators are being asked to reform their programs to provide occupational preparation that reaches higher standards for entry-level skilled workers. The need for reform has emerged in part from a call for greater accountability in vocational education and concern about the condition of the American economy as it aligns with productivity and globalization. As business educators, we are addressing occupational preparation of entry-level skilled workers within the framework of (a) program standards and (b) performance standards that have been mandated by the Perkins Act. These standards call for assessing what is currently being taught, determining present and future needs of students, and determining how those specific needs will be met by both teachers and students. A third standard, industry-based skills standards and certification, is also mandated by the Perkins Act and more recently the Goals 2000: Educate America Act legislation introduced by President William Clinton. National skill standards to be used on a voluntary basis will provide a

framework needed to ensure that workers have the portable skills required by today's fast-changing, global economy according to Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich (Office of Information, 1993). Standards should help improve productivity of U.S. workers and quality in the international marketplace as well as improve vocational education. One part of the Perkins Act and the Goals 2000: Educate America Act is to provide matching grants to develop voluntary industry-based skill standards. Both sets of legislation authorize the developments of voluntary national business and education skills standards for occupational competencies in select industries and trades. The business and education standards program provides financial assistance in the form of matching Federal grants for organizing and operating committees that will develop national skill standards for competencies in industries and trade. The twenty-two matching Federal grants that have been given to coalitions of industrial associations, educators, and labor representatives are defining the skills and knowledge needed by our current and future workforce. A goal of these grants is to "link instructional content to employment needs and address the basic job readiness and academic skills that high performance work organizations require" (Vocational Education Weekly, 1993, December).

These occupational competencies and skills are based on:

1) the major job clusters or specialty areas identified within the occupational studies,

2) the minimum hours of study to become competent in those divisions or specialties,

3) the minimum tools and equipment required,

4) the minimum qualifications for instructional staff, and

5) the minimum tasks to be included in any course of study claiming to prepare individuals for those select areas. (Perkins Act, 1990, p. 132)

In support of these authorizations, national trade associations and education groups have received grants from the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education to develop and implement on a voluntary basis national skill standards and certification in their trades and industries. These Departments have proposed that national business and education skill standards should serve three purposes: (a) improve standards of quality for less successful businesses, (b) lift national industry quality standards to the same level as those of our best international competitors, and (c) achieve accountability for the widely differing organizations in the national education and training establishment (Vocational Educational Weekly, 1992, November). The U. S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration has awarded six grants and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education has awarded sixteen grants in two phases to propose voluntary national standards for competencies in industries and trades. Grants have been awarded in such areas as electronics, retail, electrical, metalworking, computer aided drafting, air conditioning and refrigeration, bioscience, human services, supermarket and agriscience/biotechnology. Request for proposals (RFPs) were announced in the *Federal Register*. Associations and industry groups who responded to the RFPs were judged by a predetermined criteria and grants were awarded. There were no proposals developed and presented by associations to develop standards for office occupations except by the American Electronics Association.

A vital function of these grants, which are usually equally matched by federal funds from either the U.S. Department of Labor or U.S. Department of Education and funds from business and industry, is to help American business raise the quality of its workforce and improve America's

competitiveness. Also, by linking public and private training dollars to specific industry standards through these grants, productivity and efficiency for workers, employers, governments, trainers, educators, and unions are fostered. The Goals 2000: Educate America Act legislation creates a National Skills Standards Board to provide matching grants to develop business and education skills standards as well as certify skills standards and disseminate them to industry and education (U. S. Congress, 1993).

Questions for Consideration

Twenty-two matching grants have been awarded by the Departments of Labor and Education. Thus far, no proposals for development of office occupations industry-based skills standards have been submitted to the U. S. Departments of Education and Labor except the administrative/information service support cluster of the American Electronics Association. In addition, the Vocational Technical Education Consortium of States (VTECS) has just begun collaboration with Professional Secretaries International to establish national skill standards for administrative and executive support professionals. Because of the diversity and variety of office occupations and the need all industries have for these workers, is it possible to consider national industry-based skills? If so, whose responsibility would they become? Do associations, such as the National Business Education Association and Delta Pi Epsilon, have the expertise, manpower, and/or financial means to develop such standards? Should these associations join forces with selected labor representatives, office workers, job trainers, business educators, and government officials to address industry-based skills and standards? Which job classifications should be targeted for standards and certification? Once these are developed, will business and industry embrace and use them? Is technology changing so rapidly that standards would become obsolete before they are initiated? The list of questions is endless and there are many complications when considering

industry-based standards for office occupations. Yet, business educators must consider whether developing industry-based skills standards and occupational profiles for major entry-level jobs should be a goal. Should business educators provide standards and profiles specifying competency and proficiency levels as well as assessment methodologies for entry-level office occupation jobs?

Implications for Implementing National Business Education Skills Standards

Development of national business and education industry-based skills standards in office occupations has a number of implications for business education. Monies provided through the matching Federal grant program could help industry leaders and business educators collaborate in training people to work in office occupations of the future. Accepting the matching Federal grants with the challenge to create entry-level office standards invokes opportunities for industry and business educators to work together to close the gaps as to what constitutes acceptable on-the-job standards. These gaps are characteristic of the U. S. economy and result from fragmentation that has existed between education and employment. Both industry and education can use these skill standards to update education and training programs and continuously evaluate curriculum standards to make sure criteria proposed by industry-based skills standards are being met. Ongoing evaluation of business education programs is important in defining the quality of programs and in identifying and strengthening deficiencies in these programs. Such standards also help establish greater accountability for students, teachers, business programs, and schools.

Developing industry-based skills standards and incorporating these into business education programs assures business education graduates of being competitive as they seek office occupation positions. Also anticipated would be higher

wages and enhanced job security for those completing business education programs. Further, business education graduates will have portable credentials that are important in today's mobile society.

Without national skill standards, concerns of the workplace may not be properly identified and linked to office occupation curricula. The link between the training business students receive and job standards set by business and industry could become weaker, making business education programs less responsive to the needs of employers and students. Our business education high school programs could graduate entry workers who may not be competitive in getting office occupations.

Summary

The Perkins Act and Goals 2000: Educate America Act provide mandates which establish a system of standards, assessments, and certification to improve the competitiveness of the U.S. workforce. The development of national industry-based skill standards is an especially difficult, long-term process. The complexities and diversity of office occupations make the task even more cumbersome. This article has provided questions and factors that must be considered before a system of industry-based skill standards can be achieved and coordinated with business education programs. The ultimate goal is that business education become more effective in preparing its graduates for gainful employment.

Business and education skills standards do offer an opportunity for office workers to become better trained and more productive. They also provide national standards for employers to judge new hires and for educators to know what their students must know and be able to do to be considered for entry-level office occupations. The use of the standards to

judge the quality of education will, to a large extent, determine their value to business education.

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ACTIVE LEARNING TECHNIQUES FOR USE IN THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CLASSROOM

Donna Holmquist

Abstract

There are many new "buzz words" in education today and one that is heard a great deal is "active learning." Most business educators consider themselves experts in this area as compared to other disciplines; however, there is always room for improvement.

There may be things that business educators assume about "active learning" that need clarifying. Although business educators may already be using "active learning" in their classrooms, there may be other methods which they could try which might be even more successful. This article summarizes some excellent suggestions presented in the literature by several outstanding scholars.

Donna Holmquist is the Business Education Program Head at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in Lincoln, Nebraska.

What is "learning"?

> Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just by sitting in class listening to teachers, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. Students must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences, and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves (Chickering and Gamson, 1987, p. 3).

What is "active learning"?

The following paragraph describes "Active Learning":

> Active learning provides opportunities for students to talk and listen, read, write, and reflect as they approach course content through problem-solving exercises, discussion in informal small groups, simulations, case studies, role playing--all of which enable students to apply what they are learning (Wright, 1993, p. 1).

What is the purpose of using active learning?

Research shows that students learn more when they are involved in the learning process through active learning and can understand, interpret, and integrate ideas. Dr. Charles Bonwell (1993) identifies seven major characteristics associated with active learning strategies. These include the following:

1. Students are involved in more than passive listening.

2. Students are engaged in activities such as reading, discussing, writing.

3. There is less emphasis placed on information transmission and greater emphasis placed on developing student skills.

4. There is greater emphasis placed on the exploration of attitudes and values.

5. Student motivation is increased (especially for adult learners).

6. Students can receive immediate feedback from their instructor.

7. Students are involved in higher order thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation (p. 2).

What a student learns depends on what the student already knows and on how the student processes the information received. A good teacher chooses material which has meaning for the student. By using special methods such as role playing and questioning, the students learn the processes of inquiry as well as the basic information which has been presented. Active learning provides the opportunity for students to incorporate practice in the kinds of thinking that are important (Wright, 1993).

What are some problems with incorporating "active learning" into the classroom?

Some problems which faculty have with active learning is the concern that there will not be time to thoroughly cover the course content. However, it gives the teacher and the students more time to uncover interesting facts and to apply them to their own situations. Students will then be more likely to remember and use the ideas they learn (Myers and Jones, 1993).

The teacher is no longer the "expert" but instead the teacher challenges, debates, discusses, and collaborates with the students. This is a new and exciting role for the teacher--one which takes some time for adjustment. In some cases, even the students need to get used to this new "teacher figure" who used to stand before a podium and lecture for the entire period while students either took notes, whispered, daydreamed, or, in some cases, even napped (Myers and Jones, 1993).

What are some examples of "active learning"?

There are many ways of including active learning into the classroom. Business education teachers have been leaders in active learning for years. However, even those teachers who are experts in their field can learn new techniques. Here are thirteen different methods of incorporating active learning into the classroom.

1. Writing in class can include keeping a journal, summarizing a lecture, jotting down two or more important concepts discussed, etc.

2. Problem solving such as case studies about situations which arise in business followed by guided design when students define and diagnose the conditions and then identify, apply, and evaluate alternative solutions.

3. Computer-based instruction which provides interaction with ideas as well as the opportunity for repeating until the concept is mastered (as in special spreadsheet, graphic, and desktop publishing problems).

4. Cooperative learning which emphasizes effective group decision making, conflict resolution, and communication skills (such as surveying mock customers about computer

programs and then making purchasing decisions as a group).

5. Debates including presentation of supporting data, refutation, counter-examples, data, and summation.

6. Drama which uses written scripts that address specific concepts or problems (such as the best way to work with an irate customer).

7. Role-playing, simulations, and games that help students experience diverse and unfamiliar situations (such as correct and incorrect interview techniques). These are particularly helpful when teaching awareness or exploring attitudes and values.

8. Peer teaching uses partnerships in which students alternate student and teacher roles or working groups that strive collectively to enhance the skills of each group member (Wright, p. 2-3).

9. Use "pause" for enhanced retention and comprehension (e.g., asking students to work in pairs for anywhere from 10-20 minutes to examine, recapitulate, and otherwise analyze what they have just heard and how they might apply the new information to a particular problem or issue--such as a situation which has arisen regarding international business relations).

10. Give tests and quizzes to help students solidify what they have learned from a lecture and what they think about the subject or issue at hand. (Frequent quizzes also help instructors assess their own performance.)

11. Present demonstrations (as on a computer) accompanied by participative questions (e.g., "What will happen to our product if we do this?" "If this happens, then what will be

the next step?" "If we determine to make this decision, what will the consequence be?").

12. Alternative lecture formats (e.g., the "feedback lecture" which consists of two minilectures approximately 20 minutes long separated by a small group problem-solving study session or the "guided lecture" where students are asked to listen to 25-30 minutes of lecture. Students then spend five minutes writing what they can recall. This is then followed by small group discussions in which basic concepts and supporting data are pooled to produce meaningful notes. The instructor should be available to assist students). This method could be used to be certain students thoroughly understand difficult accounting concepts and how to proceed with their problems.

13. Use the "responsive lecture" in which there are open-ended student-generated questions on any aspect of the course (Bonwell, 1993, p. 2).

Haven't business educators been using active learning in their classrooms for years?

Business educators are aware that learning is generally an active endeavor; this means that students learn best when they can apply what they have learned. Business educators also know that people learn in different ways. This means that teachers must apply a variety of methods so that all students will gain from their time in class. Research does show that when students are involved in activities that lead them to discuss, question, clarify, and write about course content, they are more likely to retain the material, and their thinking abilities improve (Myers and Jones, 1993).

Because active learning encourages students to become involved in discussing, developing, and analyzing, they refer to their own experiences. This sharing of information helps

nontraditional students and culturally diverse students to feel more comfortable in the classroom. It helps these students to feel that their opinions and ideas are important and valued (Myers and Jones, 1993).

What is new about "active learning" that business educators don't already know?

There are new ideas that can be put to work in today's classrooms which will increase the interest and knowledge of the students plus give new life and direction to teachers who are interested in helping their students to gain more from their classes. Bonwell suggests the following active learning techniques which will make teaching and learning more fun and more profitable for all. (There are many additional methods which will not be listed since most teachers already use them such as buzz sessions, guest speakers, field trips, games, debates, group discussion, etc.)

1. Interactive lecture. Give students key words (as in business law) on which to focus their attention. This will provide structure and assist students in notetaking.

2. Lecturette with listening team. Teacher or guest lecturer gives a 10- to 20-minute lecturette (such as proper manners to use at a dinner meeting). After the presentation, students work in small groups and generate questions about one aspect of the presentation. They organize and prioritize their questions and each group has an opportunity to ask the presenter their questions.

3. Brainstorm session. Working with a group leader on a given problem within a determined time period (5 to 30 minutes), students call out solutions in single words or short phrases without any commentary or discussion. (An example might be what to pack on a trip to Japan.) No judgments are made until all ideas are out. The ideas are

recorded on a flipchart or blackboard. At the conclusion of the call-out, each list of ideas is edited and evaluated. This is followed by questions from the participants for clarification and comment. The instructor or a student acts as moderator. This activity involves creative thinking through free association of ideas.

4. Case studies. Teacher or students construct cases from their own experiences. Small groups make recommendations on how to solve the problems. (Example: Young married couple with one child needs to decide whether to buy a house or continue renting an apartment.)

5. Trigger video. One-to five-minute teacher-prepared visual scenarios are presented to students who are asked to identify the problem, identify different potential courses of action, and make recommendations. After solutions have been discussed, the video is turned back on and students view the course of action taken by a professional. Students may want to prepare their own videos for future classroom discussions. (Example: Accident scene in which one of the drivers appears to have been drinking and the other driver does not have a license.)

6. Exampling. Given a concept, problem, situation, or principle, students are asked to provide examples from their own experience. (Example: Ask students to give examples from their own work experiences of handling difficult customers and how the problems were solved.)

7. Mnemonics. Have students work together in small groups and create memory aids by making up words and rhymes from the first letters of ideas and concepts that need to be memorized. (Example: Using the letters of the school to help remember a specific concept.)

8. Incomplete statements. Provide incomplete statements such as "My feelings about essay tests vs. true-false tests is . . . . " Students are asked to complete this statement on a handout and then share their thoughts with the class.

9. Programmed instruction. This can be used as a preclass activity to build skills such as reviewing grammar, spelling, a specific assignment, etc.

10. Theatrics. The use of theatrical devices such as magic tricks, costuming, or other techniques to capture attention and reinforce a point will usually be appreciated by the students. This technique must relate to and reinforce the learning performance objectives and the specific teaching point in order to be useful. (Example: Teacher enters classroom on a skateboard to introduce unit on the need for insurance.)

11. Character dialogue. The teacher or a student may act out a certain character to emphasize a point. Puppets may also be used. (Example: Teacher comes to class dressed very casually and pretends to apply for a job to emphasize the importance of professional dress in the business world. Students decide what is appropriate attire and what is not appropriate attire for an interview.)

12. Student-generated questioning strategies. After the instructor has explained the different levels of questioning such as recall, understanding, application, and critical thinking, the students write questions about the subject and quiz each other.

13. Reaction panels. After a presentation has been made, a special group of students who have also studied the topic are asked to react.

14. Modeling. Students are shown a model and then they discuss why, in their opinion, this is or is not a good model. (Example: Evaluate a resume' or application letter.)

15. Symposium. Students make short presentations on different aspects of the same subject. The presentations are then followed by discussion and questions. Each student prepares a short paper on his/her part of the topic and these are shared with the other students. (Example: What is the best way to invest your savings?)

16. Personal vignette. A topic or learning objective is presented by the instructor. Students are then to relate it to their own experiences. (Example: What is the best way to organize your time?)

17. Paraphrases. Students are asked to tell the class or another student what they just heard, or all students can be asked to write down what they just heard and discuss it with another student to help clarify. (Example: Read a paragraph from a current newspaper story to the class and let students analyze what they heard and what it means.)

18. Equipment demonstration. The instructor demonstrates a piece of equipment and then asks a student to demonstrate that same piece of equipment.

19. Check lists. Students are given a check list of items to be discussed in class. As each item is covered, students check it off their list.

20. Quality circles. Periodically, small groups of students meet with the instructor to discuss feedback about the course, clarify problems the students may be having, and make suggestions about the future direction of the course.

21. Optimistic/pessimistic panel. A panel of students argues the optimistic side of an issue for ten minutes and then the same panel argues the pessimistic side for ten minutes. This is followed by class discussion of the issue. (Example: It is easier to learn accounting by using the manual method or it is easier to learn accounting by using the computer method.)

22. Pyramiding. Students first work alone on a problem, then they work in pairs, and finally in foursomes. During this time they compare, refine, and revise their conclusions and recommendations.

23. The quiet question. During the last few minutes of class the instructor hands each student a sheet of paper which asks the students to indicate any questions they have that have not been covered in class. These questions are then collected and discussed during the next day's class.

24. Cartoons with captions removed. Students are asked to make up a caption for a cartoon placed on the overhead. The cartoon should deal with the class topic for the day.

25. One-minute feedback. Instructor asks students to respond to one of the following questions: What did you find was the most confusing point in class today? What did you like best about today's class? What were the two most important points that you learned today (Bonwell, 1993, p. 4-17)?

Summary

The more exciting that business education classrooms become, the better the learning experience will be for the students. The ultimate goal of active learning in business education is to help the students enjoy their learning experience. Business education teachers need to continually work toward this goal.

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E-MAIL PRINCIPLES THAT BUSINESS TEACHERS SHOULD INCLUDE IN THEIR CURRICULUM

Marcia L. James
Robert M. Schramm

Abstract

As e-mail works its way into the business curriculum, teachers have the opportunity to guide the students in understanding how this popular communication technology should be used. Those business teachers who consider the four principles recommended in this study will prepare their students for using this technology successfully in the business environment.

Marcia L. James is a Professor and Chairperson in the College of Business and Economics at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater in Whitewater, Wisconsin.

Robert M. Schramm is a Professor in the College of Business and Economics at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater in Whitewater, Wisconsin.

Since the Local Area Network (LAN) was introduced in 1981, many business teachers found themselves becoming network literate. Now, with the emphasis on the Information Highway including the Internet and various on-line services, business teachers need to expand their networking knowledge to include one of the most popular communication tools: e-mail.

In addition to the potential for worldwide communication, e-mail systems are used by about 75 percent of United States corporations for intra-office communication (Kuebelbeck, 1991). It is critical that future business leaders (students) understand the impact this widely accepted communication tool has on individuals and organizations. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to provide data concerning the impacts of using e-mail on the individual and the organization.

Specifically, the following research questions are addressed:

1. What types of messages are appropriate for e-mail?
2. Who is sending e-mail messages? Who is receiving them?
3. What are the individual and organizational impacts of using e-mail as a communication tool?
4. Do the individual and organizational impacts of e-mail on users vary depending on the users job function?

Methodology

A national organization with considerable experience using e-mail was selected for this study. This organization has been using the Office Vision E-mail system since 1986. The e-mail users surveyed consisted of managers, front-line personnel, and clerical/support staff performing any one of three functions; namely banking, operations, and administration. The e-mail system has been updated and

expanded periodically since 1986 to take advantage of technological advances. Six weeks after this survey was taken, the Office Vision E-mail system was slated to be updated again.

Similar surveys were used in the Kerr and Hiltz study in 1982 and again by Mary Sumner in 1986. In 1991, the authors of this article reviewed the survey for applicability in today's e-mail environment. With slight modifications, the researchers pilot-tested the survey at American Family Insurance in Madison, Wisconsin, and received feedback from experienced e-mail users. The survey was again modified and field tested with about 10 users at the organization where they ultimately distributed the survey to its 2,838 e-mail users. This feedback was also used to modify the final questionnaire distributed on October 3, 1991.

The survey was distributed to 2,838 e-mail users who work for the same organization, and are all able to communicate with one another by use of a widely publicized list of e-mail identification tags. The e-mail users were found in five states and seven office locations.

The survey used in this study was duplicated and sent in bulk to the e-mail administrators at each of the seven facilities. The administrator then distributed a survey to each e-mail user for completion. The respondents were given approximately seven days to complete and return the survey to their e-mail administrator, who bulk-shipped them to a single coordinator at company headquarters in Illinois. All statistical compilation was performed at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Of the 2,838 surveys distributed, 1,109 were completed and returned.

Findings

The findings in this report provide data from four general sections of the survey instrument. The first section provides data relative to the forms of communication e-mail has displaced. The second section identifies who sends and receives e-mail messages. The third section provides data on the impacts that e-mail has had on the individual and the organizations. These findings are compared to similar research study findings. The fourth section provides data on the different impacts of e-mail on individuals performing various job functions. The findings are stated in the form of teaching principles related to using e-mail as a communication tool.

Principle No. 1. Students need to be aware that e-mail is appropriate for certain types of messages.

The respondents to the survey revealed that e-mail displaces memoranda (34 percent) and phone calls (26 percent) most frequently because of the similarity in the message content. E-mail, memoranda, and phone calls are generally used for brief messages. E-mail offers quicker feedback than memoranda and eliminates telephone tag and conversational talk that often occurs when using the telephone.

The respondents also indicated that e-mail replaces written reports least often (16 percent) due to the large quantity of information in reports. The majority of the respondents in the survey prefer to use e-mail when providing routine information (77 percent), scheduling activities (66 percent), notifying others of decisions (58 percent), and soliciting opinions (55 percent). E-mail is not to be used in negative situations such as providing criticism or resolving disagreements. Business personnel use face-to-face communication for these negative messages.

Business teachers need to instruct their students when it is appropriate to use e-mail. Teachers should stress that e-mail is one of many communication tools. It is not the appropriate tool for all communications.

Principle No. 2. Students need to be aware that e-mail messages are sent and received by personnel at different levels in the organization.

Survey respondents were asked to specify if superiors, peers, or subordinates sent or received the most messages. The study findings indicate that personnel performing non-routine jobs requiring supervisor approval sent more e-mail messages to their superiors than they did to others. Personnel requiring additional information to perform their jobs most often used e-mail to elicit information from peers. Finally, supervisors used e-mail to send multiple messages at one time to subordinates. The majority of these communications were brief informational memoranda.

The implication of this finding is that business teachers need to alert students as to who receives and sends messages. Since all levels of personnel--superiors, peers, and subordinates--are using e-mail, this suggests a greater need for learning the reasons for using this communication tool.

Principle No. 3. Students need to be aware of the impact e-mail has on individuals and the organization.

Two studies have reported that the use of e-mail affects the cognitive, affective, and behavioral patterns of participants. Sumner (1986) and Kerr and Hiltz (1982) both agreed that e-mail has the following positive effects:

* E-mail reduces lag times in distributing information.
* E-mail creates more flexible work hours.
* E-mail provides lateral linkages throughout organizations.

* E-mail expands the number of alternatives available to users and the awareness of the overall situation.
* E-mail expands the users' social interaction with the organization.

Two years ago, Kielser and Sproull (1992) reported that e-mail may cause delays in group decision making and a lack of social context. E-mail may also cause information overload.

This study does not support nor dispute their findings that the overall quality of group decision making may be affected by the use of e-mail. However, this study's respondents believed that information overload is not attributed to e-mail. This is in part due to the perception that e-mail does not allow users to deal with larger amounts of information efficiently.

Kiesler and Sproull also claimed that because electronic communication is mainly text, interaction lacks social context cues that are present in face-to-face communication. This lack of social cues changes the way participants perceive each other as equals resulting in more impulsive and less socially differentiated communication.

Sumner (1986) conducted a study similar to that of the authors'. She concurred with Kiesler and Sproull's (1992) research that the lack of nonverbal cues weakens some social context and places greater emphasis on the message.

The population of the authors' study slightly disagreed with this perception. This could be due to the fact that the majority of e-mail questions pertain to factual information that does not require positive or negative judgmental statements.

This study's respondents did not believe that e-mail improves communication, efficiency, or quality of work. In fact, the respondents were especially disappointed that they

needed more paper files since the installation of e-mail due to the number of hard copies made of e-mail messages. The respondents also noted that they had not anticipated the barriers to e-mail communication. For instance, many individuals take work home where they cannot access e-mail for timely information.

Business teachers need to make students aware of the impacts of e-mail on the individual and the organization. Like any other communication, e-mail can enhance the message or cause barriers.

Principle No. 4. Students need to be aware that the effects of using e-mail may vary depending on an individual's responsibilities within the company.

As previously stated, e-mail users were categorized by one of three major job functions: banking, operations, and administration.

Banking personnel primarily dealt with customer billing and payment processing. This job function required a high degree of teamwork and coordination concerning policies.

Operations personnel primarily handled customer service. These professionals required access to a variety of information sources to deal with unique customer situations.

Administrative personnel were responsible for the supervision of employees. This group of employees communicated frequently with lower-level employees within their span of control.

Overall, operations personnel perceived greater benefits of using e-mail than did banking and administrative personnel. This was expected because of operations personnel's need to seek information from a variety of sources throughout the

organization. Operations personnel agreed significantly stronger than banking and administrative personnel that using e-mail encourages users to see/send information they normally would not, increases the variety of ideas users may have, and allows workers to deal with larger amounts of information more efficiently. As a result of their expanded lateral communications using e-mail, operations personnel also have a stronger belief that e-mail can increase cross-group communication and improve the quality of work.

Due to the flexibility required in the banking area, these e-mail users felt strongly that one of the benefits of e-mail was to allow for communication at the time of one's own choice rather than during a forced time period. Banking personnel also strongly agreed that the rapid communication provided by e-mail reduced the lag time waiting for responses.

Finally, because of the predominance of the use of e-mail for subordinate communications, administrative employees consistently perceived e-mail to be the least beneficial to their jobs. For example, of the three groups, administrative personnel disagreed strongest with statements such as:

* E-mail provides a sense of belonging in terms of expanding the number of social participations and the scope of social relationships.
* E-mail may increase the variety of ideas a user may have.
* E-mail systems encourage users to see/send information that they normally would not.

The findings indicate that e-mail does not impact all users in the same manner. Therefore, business teachers should stress the varying degree of impacts using e-mail may have on an individual or group of individuals as a result of the users' primary job function.

Application for Business Teachers

Too many times business teachers are so enthusiastic about teaching the latest software tool, that they fail to emphasize how the abundance of new technology will affect future business leaders' personal and professional lives. This study presents data that provide a basis for discussing e-mail as a communication tool. Readers are presented with four basic teaching principles which can be used when presenting information on how e-mail affects the individual and the organization. Only when students fully comprehend the impact of this exciting technology on people and organizations can they truly appreciate the power of using e-mail as a communication tool.

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TECHNOLOGY AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION

M. Latif Javed

Abstract

The fast and affordable international telecommunication systems are creating a global economy and a global culture in part.

In spite of increased assimilation due to improved communication, countries remain distinct in their history, values, communication styles, and business methods. The U.S. leadership in developing information superhighways for domestic and international markets must be accompanied by an understanding of other cultures for successful business and economic relations.

Business education students must learn new communication skills to meet the demands of their market. An understanding of other cultures will help them cope with the cultural diversity at home and abroad.

M. Latif Javed is a Professor in the Office Systems and Business Communication Department at McNeese State University in Lake Charles, Louisiana.

Technology and International Communication

Rudyard Kipling's famous saying "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet" is now very much questionable in light of what is happening in international communication. "Today East and West and North and South meet almost constantly; by telephone, by fax, by radio and television news, and across negotiating tables as people of different nationalities come together to do business" ("Teaching business on a global plane," 1993, p. 1).

Technology is playing a pivotal role in ever increasing communication between different nations. Just get on-line and conduct business instantly, domestic and international. All you need is a personal computer, a nearby telephone jack, a modem, communications software, and a few hours of training; and you are ready to communicate inland or across the ocean.

The increasing international connectivity of telegraph and telephone, earth stations, satellites, and fiber optic cables is lighting up the international communication lines more than ever before. International phone calling from the U.S. is expected to spurt more than 20 percent this year as compared to domestic by just 2.7 percent ("Dialing for dollars: far from home," 1992). Continued advances in facsimile machines and modems with transmission speeds of 14,400 bits per second have made international communication rapid, tangible, and affordable. The multimedia technology and the information superhighways may bring together people from areas as far and as diverse as the U.S., China, Europe, Russia, and Australia. This article highlights the impact of information technology on international communication, identifies some cultural differences especially between the East and the West, suggests ways of handling international communication in the changing global environment, and closes with a statement of implications for business education.

Information Technology and International Communication

Here are some of the ways the new information technology is impacting international communication:

1. On-line information services due to computer networks are becoming a nearly invisible thread in the worldwide fabric of human communication. *Internet*, a collection of about 34,000 networks and subsidized by the U.S. government, is estimated to have 15 million users in 50 countries and is growing fast (Carneval, 1993). Computer networks have a sure although slower growth in advanced Asian and European countries also.

2. Electronic bulletin boards are helping firms exchange information with customers and staff. In 1993, 13.5 million people used bulletin boards with numbers rising every day.

3. The data-market traffic is growing four times faster than voice. Worldwide revenue for data networks is estimated at $4.5 billion and is expected to grow 13 percent a year (Keller, 1993).

4. The communication technology is spreading fast. The pocket-size cellular phones, portable computers, satellite stations, and the network technology are connecting areas as remote as Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Finland, and New Zealand.

5. Technology can now deliver international communication in different languages. WorldScript of Apple Computer is capable of translating a message simultaneously in 50 different languages. AT&T provides a Language Line service which offers over-the-phone interpreters in 140 languages, 24 hours a day.

This global communication environment is promoting international trade which earns U.S. corporations almost one-third of their profits. One in six jobs in the U.S. is also due to foreign trade. Over 100,000 Americans are working abroad and about four million travel overseas to conduct business every year ("Teaching business on a global plane," 1993). The world economy now depends upon exports and imports which in turn is increasing communication between different countries. Just think of the spirit and motivation behind GATT and NAFTA and their impending impact on the growth of international communication.

Trends and Developments in International Communication

Of the many trends and developments in international communication, the following are particularly noteworthy:

1. The Anglo-American language (i.e., English) dominates news media and technology. "Fast Forward" and "Read-only-memory" are part of the universal vocabulary as are MTV and CNN.

2. English is the language of international politics, science, and computers, as well as air traffic control, tourism and business (Stevenson, 1992).

3. The U.S. is leading the world in developing multimedia technology and creating information superhighways with English-speaking as well as international markets in mind.

4. A global culture is emerging due to multinational corporations and multiethnic/multiculture immigration, particularly from the East to the West. This global culture, however, is highly commercialized and considered a threat to the real culture (Stevenson, 1992). For example, the French like Euro Disneyland as an investment but consider it to be an onslaught on their culture.

5. The Western media dominates the world, particularly after the collapse of communism. Voice of America, BBC, and CNN broadcast news throughout the world with many programs in native languages. Also, the Western media is going through domestic and international mergers with increased ownership of outsiders. Four of seven top Hollywood studios are foreign owned (Stevenson, 1992). Many publishing and recording companies, airlines, and telecommunication companies are forming global consortiums and partnerships--MCI Communications with British Telecom, U.S. Sprint with Northern Telecom of Canada, U.S. Air with British Airways, Reuters with U.S. Public Broadcasting, and the list goes on.

The Challenge of International Communication

The international telecommunication systems and the news media are promoting the emergence of a global culture and making the world smaller. In spite of increased assimilation, cultural diversity is still a fact even within the boundaries of a country. "No matter how much Russians like American Rock music and McDonald's hamburgers, they remain different from Americans . . . . Even the English, who share a common language, would never be mistaken for Americans" ("Different strokes for different folks," 1993, p. 1). The countries remain distinct in their history, values, communication styles, and business methods. The Japanese are still viewed as mysterious Easterners. Arabs, in spite of their billions of dollars of trade and investment in the West, are still villains.

The environment of cultural diversity and the dominance of Western media and culture are not without reactionary forces in which language, religion, and race are becoming a source of asserting cultural independence. The situations in Bosnia, South Africa, Ireland, Kashmir, and Palestine are a few cases in point. Pakistan disintegrated on

language conflict; India has North-and-South rivalry due to different languages; Canada has a possibility of disintegrating over language; the United States is facing a controversy over English as the only official language. The French, even if they know English, insist on speaking French with visitors. U.S. immigrants in larger cities have television and radio programs in their native languages. American Chinese still like to live in Chinatown and eat with chopsticks.

Culture and International Communication

A knowledge of different cultures is essential to engage effectively in international communication. Through cultural experiences (language; religion; economic, political and educational systems; climate; work and time values; music; and much more), a person assimilates values and attitudes which influence his/her communication with people from other cultures. For example, Eastern cultures value humility as a virtue and a sign of maturity and politeness whereas humility is regarded as a weakness in Western cultures. In Eastern cultures, "blowing your own horn" may be immediately shot down as bragging.

Modesty in walking, talking, and charitable giving is taught and commended in most Eastern cultures. "Don't walk with arrogance on earth; you are to go in it." "Give with one hand with the other hand not knowing it" meaning that charity is for the sake of charity, not for showing off. Modesty is often stressed with the similitude of a fruit tree. The more a tree bears fruit, the more it bows down (in modesty) as compared to a tree which bears no fruit; so the wiser the man, the humbler he is.

Culture influences the assignment of meanings to words. For example, while someone in the States will interpret "restroom" as "bathroom," the word may mean "bedroom" in some cultures. The word "bathroom" itself can have different

meanings to different people. In some cultures, there is no concept of sitting in the tub to bathe; to those people, "bath" means "shower." The word "sunshine" does not have much appeal to people living in hot climates. Unlike people who live in cold climates, people from hot climates yearn for some clouds for relief from the scorching "sunshine."

People in some cultures may be more concerned with the emotional context of a word than its meaning. The word "shame" has a derogatory meaning in some cultures, no matter how jokingly the word "shame" is used. The U.S. phrase "shame on you" or "it is a shame that you could not make it" may highly insult people from Eastern cultures. To them, the word carries the emotional implications of being "shameless"--a highly provocative remark.[1]

Casual references such as whether someone is married, divorced, separated, or widowed may be routine in America, but such a discussion disturbs people from some Eastern cultures because a marital reference instantly arouses emotions. Those cultures do not have the relationships of "mother's ex-husband" or "father's new wife." Because of low divorce rates and few remarriages, children may have very little experience with such terminology. The orientation of respect toward parents also is different; therefore, an inquiry about the marital status of a parent can insult the norm of respect for parents. Similarly, because of social prestige, steprelations in those cultures are not openly discussed; whereas, such relations are spoken about very realistically in Western cultures.[1]

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[1]Note: From "Making a smooth transmission through international correspondence," by the author (1981, January), Today's Secretary, 83(4), pp. 18-19. Copyright by Glenco/Macmillan/McGraw-Hill. Adapted with permission.

Culture also includes the relationship of what is said to what is actually meant--"no" may mean "may be," and "tomorrow" may mean "never." For example, a common sign in Indian and Pakistani shops, "No credit until tomorrow" probably will be interpreted by a Westerner that "credit will be available tomorrow." But what the sign really means is "no credit at all." You go the next day only to read the same "tomorrow" in the sign again. The sign is really a polite way of saying that the shopping terms are cash only.[1]

Handling International Communication

Learning about other cultures is the first step toward handling international communication. An ideal way to understand another culture is to learn the language of that culture. Advertised programs and computer software that teach foreign languages are available. "Power Japanese," "Transparent Language" for Spanish, and "SpeechWorks" on 30 different tongues are available on the market (Buckeley, 1993). Since learning a foreign language is often impractical due to the time and effort involved, here are some suggestions to facilitate communication with people of other cultures.

Conversation

1. Speak slowly in simple language and avoid slang. The tragedy of the Japanese student in Baton Rouge may have been prevented had the "defensive host" used the word "stop" instead of "freeze."

2. Sprinkle your conversation with some words and phrases in the language of your listeners (Dulek, Fielden, and Hill, 1991). Words such as "thank you," "please," "welcome," and "goodbye" will help build rapport with the audience.

3. Watch your body language. Many American gestures have entirely different meanings in other countries. A "thumb-and-index finger" circle for "okay" in America is a vulgar sign in Brazil, "money" in Japan, and "worthless" in

southern France. "Thumb up" is "I don't give a damn" in some parts of India.

4. If using an interpreter, make sure he/she can interpret the spirit of the message, not the literal meanings of the words. Pepsi Cola's slogan "Come alive with Pepsi" is known to have been translated in China as "your dead will come alive out of the grave with Pepsi." The GM's car "Nova" in South America meant "it won't go"; no wonder the car did not sell well there. Intel Corporation spent millions on investigating throughout the world the "Pentium" word for any derogatory meaning before naming their latest microprocessor.

5. Find out and observe the formality of addressing by names. Japanese, for example, use courtesy titles and like to be called by their surnames and so do the people in India and Pakistan. Japanese use "san" meaning "honorable" after their surnames; exactly the same way, the word "sahib" is used in India-Pakistan.

Presentation

1. Present a respectable appearance. Your foreign audience admires you as a member of a respected nation. Clumsy and careless appearance will ruin that image. Your appearance precedes your presentation and will determine the respect you gain from your audience.

2. Never use vulgar language, particularly in the presence of women. All people enjoy genuine humor but not off-color jokes.

3. Expect a different meeting behavior from a foreign audience. Unlike Europe and America, people in the Middle East and Latin America are not overly time conscious. A meeting may start late because of the wait for an important

person or high-ranking official. Nodding heads may mean "yes, I understand," not that "I agree." Eye-contact or lack of it has different meanings, too. Looking down or keeping the head down is a sign of respect in Asian countries, especially when facing elders or in boss/subordinate relationships ("A world of differences," 1993).

Unless your audience has the Western orientation, do not offer to shake hands with females in Eastern cultures and also do not expect a smile from a female. A female's smiles to a man in some cultures is considered an invitation for a love affair. Note that "hand clapping" in some Eastern cultures is not always an applause of approval or commendation, but rather disapproval.

Personal and social spaces are also different from culture to culture. Japanese are more conscious of personal space than even the Americans. In some cultures, practically no "personal space" exists.

4. Keep in mind the rank and age of important members of your foreign audience. In some Eastern cultures, people in high positions are very conscious of status and elderly people command a special respect. Americans' blunt and straightforward talk in the presence of such members in the audience may be considered rude and disrespectful.

Writing

1. Use either a direct or an indirect approach of writing based on the culture. Eastern cultures may understand polite but direct writing as compared to the Western cultures for which an indirect approach is usually a better choice.

2. Whenever possible, enclose a translation in the recipient's language for technical jargons and subtle words that may not be clear to the non-native readers. Also, keep in mind

the different measurements, weights, and currencies when using them in writing.

3. Expect different document format and style when corresponding with other countries. Word spelling listed as a second choice in American English may be the first choice in the countries with British English. "Color" is "colour," "behavior" is "behaviour," and "learned" is "learnt."

4. Keep in mind the diversity of the English language--American vs. British English. Some terms and conversational words are different in each type of English. American "notary public" in Britain is "oath commissioner"; "check out a book" is "issue a book"; "elevator" is "lift"; "luggage" is "baggage"; and "checking account" is "current account."

5. Expect to see in foreign correspondence what Americans call a sex-biased language. The American methods of avoiding sex-biased language are still not acceptable in other countries. "Chairwoman" or "chairperson" is still a "chairman." The American ingenuity of circumventing a woman's unknown marital status with "Ms." is not yet acceptable. The British viewpoint on "Ms." is that a woman is either a "Miss" or a "Mrs."; she can't be "in between."

Implications for Business Education

In spite of all the underlying cultural differences, East and West and North and South are meeting every day through the new information technology. Rudyard Kipling "couldn't have foreseen communication satellites that beam communication across the world almost instantly, jet planes that transport people between continents in a matter of hours, or machines that spew out messages that were written minutes

before in offices thousands of miles away" ("Teaching business on a global plane," 1993, p. 1).

The United States is engaged in business with every country of the world. The business educators must wake up to the call of "new world economic order" in which only those harnessed with new technology and skills will win. The September 1992 issue of *Instructional Strategies - An Applied Research Series (Vol. 8, No. 5)* published by Delta Pi Epsilon outlines the telecommunications competencies and skills needed for the changing business world. Business education students must learn these new as well as the traditional communication skills to meet the demands of their domestic and international markets. Ideally, they should acquire some foreign language skills to be able to communicate with other people and have enough understanding of other cultures to appreciate and cope with the cultural diversity at home and abroad. This is the only way America can compete in today's global economy. If not, business teachers and students will lose out in the job market and America will have a tougher time competing in the world market.

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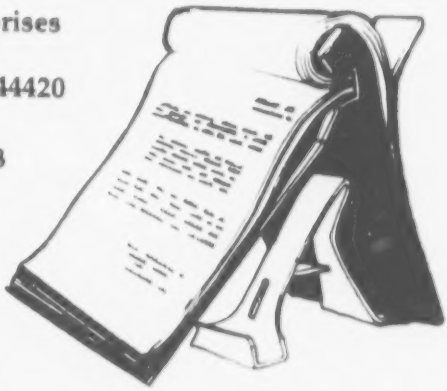

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USING TEAMS IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION CLASSES

Laura MacLeod
Sandra J. Nelson

Abstract

To help students gain skill in teamwork, business instructors should understand group dynamics. The purpose of this article is to share ideas on the composition, selection, and evaluation of teams to help instructors coordinate team activities and assignments. Suggestions for short- and long-term projects are provided.

Laura MacLeod is an Assistant Professor at Indiana State University in Terre Haute, Indiana.

Sandra J. Nelson is an Assistant Professor at Indiana State University in Terre Haute, Indiana.

In recent years, working in teams has become an increasingly important aspect of business. Teams of employees are involved in committee work and projects. United States manufacturers are counting on organizational structures centered around small groups to increase productivity. For example, Ford Industries uses various types of teams, such as problem-solving, interface, opportunity, linking, launch, research, and special projects teams (Johnson & Johnson, 1991).

Therefore, it is imperative that business students develop skills in teamwork. To encourage the development of team skills, instructors must understand group dynamics. Group dynamics is a complex topic and involves team selection, cohesion, conflict management, and evaluation. While helping students learn techniques of developing group cohesion and conflict management is important, the purpose of this article is to share with business instructors ideas on the composition, selection, and evaluation of teams. In addition, suggestions for business communication team projects are presented.

Team Composition

When developing work groups, the heterogeneous group is preferred (Holder, 1979; Johnson, Johnson, Holubec, & Roy, 1984) and is identified with successful performance (Pearce & Ravlin, 1987). With diversity in such areas as ability, gender, and communication skills, heterogeneous groups provide an opportunity for a wide range of thinking and increased perspective on the task (Johnson, et al., 1984).

Team Selection

Team membership can be determined by the teacher, by the students, or by random selection methods. Beaman and Stoltz (1992) conducted two surveys of instructors to

determine which methods of selection were most frequently used. The results of the first survey of 25 instructors indicated that 68 percent of the instructors selected team members, 16 percent left the decision to the students, and 16 percent used random-selection methods. In the second survey of 25 instructors, 28 percent determined group membership by proximity in the classroom, 40 percent left the membership decision to the students, and 36 percent used a random method.

Selection methods involving the teacher or student have drawbacks. When teachers select team members, groups may blame instructors for dysfunctional groups. Students often select friends as group members, and this team makeup can be dysfunctional because of the tendency toward lack of leadership (Beaman & Stoltz, 1992). In addition, student-selected groups tend to be homogeneous.

Of course, the possibility exists for the teacher and students to be dissatisfied with a randomly-selected team. However, from the results of one survey (Beaman & Stoltz, 1992) student opinion about selection methods is divided. According to the survey results, 94 percent of the respondents had participated in groups selected by the teacher, students, or random methods. Of this group, 21 percent felt these selection methods resulted in a dysfunctional group, 27 percent felt positive about team performance, and 52 percent were undecided.

Involving both teachers and students in the selection of team members may circumvent the drawbacks of selection and produce successful teams (Beaman & Stoltz, 1992; Johnson, et al., 1984). For example, one combination selection method could involve students indicating team member preferences and teachers making the final team member selection based on student preferences and student ability.

Group Size

While having heterogeneous team membership and having compatible team members are important, of equal importance is the size of the team. The following group size guidelines were suggested by Johnson, et al. (1984):

1. The nature of the task dictates group size.
2. The optimum group size is two to six members.
3. The shorter the task time, the smaller the group.
4. The larger the group, the more collaborative skills are needed.

Several researchers have drawn conclusions concerning the optimum size group. For example, Holder (1979) reported that four-member groups are workable and effective. The author suggested that smaller groups lack a variety of ideas and that larger groups may allow students to become nonparticipants.

In Hare's (1962) review of literature on group size, he concluded that a five-member team is the optimum for problem solving and discussing. His conclusion was based on the following disadvantages of larger groups: 1) decreased opportunity for each member to speak, 2) reduced strength of affectionate ties among members, 3) increased problems with coordination, 4) decreased participation of shy members, 5) expanded difficulty in reaching consenus, and 6) reduced sensitivity and expressed support among team members.

Evaluation

The success of a group not only depends on composition and group size but on the method of evaluating the group. When deciding on the evaluation method, the concept termed "social loafing" should be considered. A group member may not exert as much effort as he/she would have if

working alone, and this lack of participation is called social loafing (Harkins & Jackson, 1985).

Several researchers have provided solutions to eliminate social loafing. Harkins and Jackson (1985) concluded that a group member's output must be individually identifiable and comparable with outputs of coworkers. Harkins and Szymanski (1989) provided two similar requirements to discourage social loafing--some measure of output and some type of standard against which output can be compared. A simpler solution to social loafing was suggested by Szymanski and Harkins (1987). They discovered that simply providing participants with potential for self evaluation was sufficient to eliminate loafing. These solutions to social loafing would seem to favor an individual grade for at least a portion of the group work.

Furthermore, a decision must be made whether to evaluate output, team behaviors, or a combination of the two methods. The output of the group, whether produced by each individual or by the group, can be evaluated based on quality and/or quantity. In addition, the behavior of members and the way they function together as a group may be evaluated. To combat social loafing, teachers could give individual output grades and use one of several alternatives to encourage effective group performance. The teachers may give a second grade based on the total performance of all group members. Or, instructors may provide some nonacademic reward such as a food or gift item to group members who perform well together (Johnson, et al., 1984).

When a decision is made to evaluate group behaviors, instructors need a method of documenting those behaviors. Information about group behavior can be gathered and recorded through various methods such as diaries, questionnaires, video playback, and interviews. However, one of the most common means of gathering group information is observation with the use of a guide sheet.

If the team members are working outside of class, one of the group members can be assigned the responsibility of observing and evaluating the group's behavior. However, if in-class activities are being conducted in teams, a student who is not a member of the group or the teacher could be responsible for evaluating the group's behavior.

To increase accuracy, observers of groups should be given a limited number of types of behaviors to observe. The behaviors can correspond to the following established characteristics of effective groups provided by Johnson and Johnson (1991):

1. Goals are clear and relevant.
2. Ideas and feelings are communicated among team members.
3. Participation and leadership opportunities are available among group members.
4. Influence and power are derived from expertise, ability, and access to information.
5. Decision-making methods and procedures coordinate with the situation, and consensus is sought.
6. Conflicts are encouraged and managed.
7. Interpersonal behaviors are emphasized.
8. Problem-solving ability is high.
9. Evaluation of group effectiveness and improvement adjustments are made by group members.
10. Interpersonal effectiveness and innovation are encouraged.

Observers can rate on a five-point scale or check "yes" or "no" to evaluate the effectiveness of the group based on the above factors. Or, members of the group can be evaluated by having the observer count the frequency with which they engaged in various positive and negative behaviors.

In addition, Jaques (1992) provided an example of an observation sheet teachers could use to identify 14 roles.

More specifically, the form includes six task roles (initiating, clarifying, seeking information, giving information, integrating, and consensus testing), and eight maintenance roles (encouraging/supporting, mediating, standard-setting, compromising, gatekeeping, releasing tension, expressing group feelings, and being open). Last, Jaques' observation form listed seven negative roles: dominating, manipulating, blocking, belittling, distracting, splitting, and excluding. A summary of the observation sheet could inform groups what roles were used. If such an observation form is used, the instructor can then help the students develop a larger repertoire of positive roles.

Finally, an interaction diagram could be used by observers to determine the participation rate of each group member. During a discussion, each spoken message is plotted on the interaction diagram. Circles are drawn to indicate each member's place around a table. During each interaction, the observer draws an arrow from the speaker to the receiver. An arrow stops in the middle if a comment is addressed to the entire group.

Examples of Group Assignments for Business Communication

Along with considering methods of evaluation, teachers must decide on appropriate team assignments. The following assignments are suggested as appropriate for business writing class teams. The assignments are briefly described along with selection and evaluation methods.

Learning the "You" Attitude

Teams can be used so students can help each other learn the material given in the textbook. Students could help each other learn the concept of the "you" attitude and learn to incorporate this concept in various letter types ranging from bad news to application letters. For example, a contest among

teams could be held where the teams would be given letters containing poor examples of the "you" attitude and instructed to rewrite the letters. The class could then vote on the winning letter. The students, therefore, learn by helping one another write a better letter and learn by reading the letters prepared by other teams.

Selection. The instructor asks students to identify peers with whom they prefer to work and builds a heterogeneous team with students who selected one another and students who were not selected. By grouping students with various levels of capabilities together, good students learn from helping the less capable students understand the information. For example, good students could be given the responsibility of teaching a concept to the group. The good student learns the material by preparing, teaching, and discussing the content. Groups of four work well for this activity since members must be responsible for each other's learning.

Evaluation. The evaluation method should encourage students to assume responsibilities for learning the assigned material themselves and to make sure all others learn the material. To accomplish this goal, students are given an objective test concerning the "you" attitude. The instructor gives the group a grade which is the sum of individual scores on the test, or provides individual scores on the test plus bonus points based on the number of group members reaching preset goals.

Learning Letter Content or Communication Barriers

Brainstorming can be used to determine ideas for the content of a sales letter or to identify the barriers to communication in a particular situation.

Selection. Larger groups of six are appropriate for brainstorming activities because discussion of members' suggestions is discouraged and because information is presented in an unstructured manner. The instructor forms heterogeneous groups based on the students' past rate of participation in class and student peer choice. This selection method prevents a group composed entirely of the quiet students who will be hesitant to participate.

Evaluation. The instructor observes each group to determine whether effective group procedures are being followed and provides feedback after the activity on behavior that needs to be corrected. To evaluate the output for this activity, the instructor provides some reward, such as a nonacademic prize, to the group that identified the largest number of acceptable items and involved every group member in the activity.

Learning to Write as a Team

A group writing activity could involve determining the solution to a problem, analyzing the audience, preparing an outline, and writing a memorandum.

Selection. In a college classroom, students could be assigned to perform this assignment out of class. Therefore, the instructor can select groups based on free time to meet, attitudes toward the task, preferred problem-solving approaches, and peer choices. The instructor distributes a questionnaire to the students asking for this information and builds heterogeneous groups using questionnaire responses.

Evaluation. To discourage social loafing, the instructor has each student submit a memo. However, on the day that the letter is submitted, the instructor asks each group member to complete a survey form evaluating the effectiveness of the group. Johnson and Johnson's (1991) previously mentioned

list of effective group characteristics could be used as a basis for developing this survey form.

The instructor then examines the survey forms of each group and assigns a grade based on average ratings provided. With this form, individual members are not evaluated, but the group as a whole is evaluated. Therefore, students become responsible for each others' actions to better the group.

Learning to Conduct an Interview

Role playing can be used in groups to learn how to conduct interviews.

Selection. To select team members, the instructor asks the students to select a peer with whom they are comfortable. Next, the instructor places two pairs of students together based on the students' peer choices and other variables such as ability or gender. Groups of four are appropriate for role playing interviewing techniques with two students role playing interviewing and two students acting as observers.

Evaluation. The instructor provides the student observers with an observation sheet to be used to evaluate the interviewer. The observation sheet includes a list of effective interview techniques to use during each phase of an interview. All four students can be given the opportunity to be the interviewer during the group activity if time permits.

Learning to Work in Long-Term Teams

An example of a long-term group writing assignment could involve completing the problem-solving steps together to prepare an analytical report. Groups share the various responsibilities of the assignment, but each member submits an individual report. For example, group members, as a team,

identify the factors to be researched. Then, the research efforts are shared, with each student gathering five articles on an assigned factor. Next, group members develop a questionnaire related to the report topic. The instructor assigns one primary research responsibility such as interviewing a businessperson to gather information related to a factor. The group then shares findings with other members of the class in an information report. Groups may decide to meet to discuss findings, interpret data, and draw conclusions.

Selection. To encourage cohesive groups for this long-term assignment, the instructor asks each student to submit an anonymous (individually coded) resume and cover letter. The resume includes work experience, communication experience, grade point average, extracurricular activities, and times students are available to meet. The instructor then selects the leaders for the teams. The team leaders study the resumes and negotiate with each other for members. This method makes both the instructor and the leader responsible for team membership. Also, teams will tend to be heterogeneous since resumes are reviewed blindly (Beaman & Stoltz, 1992).

Evaluation. At the end of various phases of this assignment, group members are evaluated. According to Jaques (1991), a formative evaluation (to provide useful suggestions to those involved) is generally of greater learning value than a summative one, completed at the end of a project.

A rating form can be used that allows members to evaluate themselves as well as each of the other group members. The instructor reviews all forms for an individual and draws conclusions concerning the honesty of the self-evaluation and the overall contribution of that student to the group's activities. Each student is assigned a grade based on overall contribution, effort, quality of ideas, etc. as well as honesty of self-evaluation. Johnson & Johnson (1991) provide

several examples of self-evaluation forms that can be used in this situation.

To be successful, business students must be able to work in teams. Therefore, they must be given sufficient opportunities to develop these skills through various group activities in business classes. The business instructor can enhance learning during these group activities by making appropriate decisions concerning size and composition of the group as well as group member selection and evaluation.

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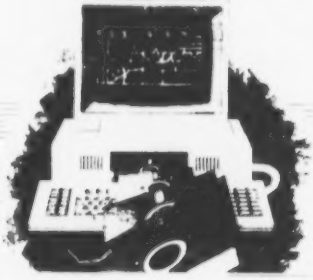

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ENHANCING COMPUTER SIMULATIONS THROUGH CONSENSUAL BUSINESS PROBLEM-SOLVING FORMATS: IMPACTS OF STUDENT DIVERSITY UPON LEARNING OUTCOMES

James L. Morrison

Abstract

Co-emulation theory, suggesting that individuals have a tendency to modify aspects of their own problem-solving styles by adapting to a peer consciousness during group arrangements, was utilized as a basis for an experiment in complex-problem solving. Twenty-four students engaged in a problem-solving task over a 7-day period by keyboarding comments from personal computers located at varying sites. Based upon interviews at the conclusion of the task, it was determined that student diversity in critical thinking patterns employed, communicating styles implemented, and work management routines adopted impacted upon the pace of the exchanges and the ability to create consensual relationships. Suggestions for enhancing the computer simulation model utilized are provided.

James L. Morrison is a Professor of Occupational/Consumer Economics in the College of Human Resources at the University of Delaware in Newark, Delaware.

A revolution in communications technology is occurring today in business, educational, and governmental institutions not only in the USA but throughout the world community. An integral part of this revolution is the "merging" of computing, communication and cultural diversity into interactive networks enabling individuals to extend themselves beyond the confines of a local setting.

According to Ithiel de Sola Pool (1990), considered by some as a pioneer in the field of social and political communication, "distance is ceasing to be a barrier to communication. As a result, the spatial organization of human activity will profoundly change" (Pool, p. 8). The challenge before business educators is structuring new learning environments that take advantage of recent technological advancements for the purpose of enhancing the development of analytical and other related critical thinking skills that have become the "calling card" of this decade and the coming 21st Century.

Research Objectives

The primary objective of the experiment was to determine student capability for adapting problem-solving routines learned in traditional educational formats (e.g., discussion groups, case studies, etc.) to a computer-based business meeting that extends human interaction. A secondary objective was to determine the extent that "peer interaction" by means of computer-based dialogue (exchange) has upon influencing individual critical thinking strategies during a complex problem-solving activity.

Based upon Harasim's observation that computer conferencing is an appropriate mechanism "to shape and define an expanded space for collaborative effort," an experiment was conducted to determine its adaptability within the confines of a simulated business meeting conducted in an academic setting

(Harasim, p. 7). Computer conferencing enables individuals to send messages to one another on selected topics with the messages being organized and stored sequentially in a centralized file. Harasim (1993) perceives computer conferencing as a mechanism for "increasing our range of human connectedness," enabling individuals to meet to conduct business, to collaborate on a task, to solve a problem, to organize a project, or simply to engage in personal dialogue (Harasim, p. 16).

Co-Emulation Theory and Computer Conferencing Delineated

What appears to be intriguing is that a new era in learning may be emerging in which the individualistic nature of learning in the past may be giving way to a completely new version focusing upon consensual formats. Correspondingly, co-emulation, a label coined by Harasim, depicts a very contemporary perspective that suggests a need for individuals both in school and in the workplace to move beyond competitive relationships into more consensual and reciprocal relationships to meet social, economic, and environmental challenges of the 21st century (Harism, p. 14). Important to this "enhanced connectedness" is a person's ability to communicate that transcends time and space, resulting in interactive exchanges anytime and with anyone at any location throughout the world.

Correspondingly, a primary problem with both audio and video conferencing for implementing co-emulation theory as a basis for group problem-solving is that these alternatives are generally expensive since they require advance preparation, special facilities, and compatible equipment, etc. However, a more cost-efficient and readily available alternative is computer conferencing, which is text-based and easily accommodated on existing computer networks by business and consumer faculty in public/private K-16 educational system.

According to Irving Janis (1982), there are several significant advantages to computer conferencing as a mechanism for solving a complex problem. There is no requirement to have all participants logged into the computer simultaneously; they may participate at a time of their own choosing. The absence of time pressures permits thoughtful comments and responses to questions from others. Conferencing software now enables the polling of participants on their views. The absence of physical interaction also reduces the social pressure toward "groupthink," that is, succumbing to direct peer pressure due to non-verbal factors (facial expressions or hand movements, etc.) or verbal remarks that may hinder the expressing of one's true feelings or ideas. For example, Janis (1982) argues that contributions to a computer-based meeting, appearing as text, are more informal in style and are judged on their content and less influenced by the status of the originator, position of hierarchy, sex, age, and so forth. Janis also stresses an important uniqueness to computer conferencing in that the ability to submit anonymous messages allows the raising of an issue that might otherwise remain hidden because no one wanted to be the individual to bring it up.

Moreover, computer conferencing also eliminates one person monopolizing a meeting by dominating the interaction among individuals. Finally, if a provocative statement is made by one of the participants, each individual can respond at her/his personal computer without being preempted by other responses. According to Murray Turoff, considered by some as the "founding father" of computer conferencing, "for any group that has a keyboarding capability of 30 words a minute, the computer conference becomes more efficient with four or more individuals in a discussion" (Pool, p. 88).

Methodology

Since co-emulation theory suggests that individuals in a group problem-solving activity have a tendency to arrive at better decisions than by thinking in isolation, a computer-based meeting (or computer conference) was designed to interconnect students for the purpose of analyzing and solving a legal problem in the marketplace. With technology enabling learning to be insensitive to distance; students shared their ideas by keyboarding comments from personal computers situated at varying sites over a 7-day period any time during the day or night. Using an IBM 3090E mainframe and IBM Groupware software, contributions were sequentially numbered and filed centrally and accessed by means of a menu and corresponding index. There were no classes held during the week of the computer simulations. The reason for no class meetings was to avoid any outside influence (beyond the actual computer conference itself) on the part of either other students or the class instructor upon student problem-solving routines being utilized during the actual simulated business meeting.

Twenty-four students were interviewed concerning their problem-solving strategies at the conclusion of the one-week non-class meeting. Students were provided specific guidelines for formatting, monitoring, and organizing their comments to reduce the opportunity for confusion during the academic meeting. These guidelines included:

1. setting deadlines for entering comments;
2. structuring comments by standardizing formats;
3. using code names for privacy;
4. justifying comments by direct references to texts;
5. prohibiting meetings outside of class;
6. limiting contact with instructor;
7. labeling contributions systematically.

The simulation required each student to fulfill a role as a member of the Federal Trade Commission. The group was to attain a consensus as to whether the Federal Trade Commission should propose a revision of the Sherman and Clayton Anti-Trust Acts to allow business to collaborate in order to compete against global competitors or whether the Acts should remain in place as originally devised for the purpose of protecting consumers from possible abusive powers of American businesses. The backdrop to the meeting was global competition and the dilemma between protecting consumer interests/American free enterprise system (FTC being more intrusive) or enhancing business ability to compete against foreign companies (FTC being less intrusive) operating under different sets of regulatory rules. Each student was required to enter at least 6 comments during the one-week project. If 75 percent of the students agreed as to the one best position, it was considered that a consensus was achieved.

Findings

At the conclusion of the computer simulation, 17 of 24 (71%) of the participants agreed that the FTC should become less intrusive in the marketplace and permit the business community to collaborate more in an effort to better confront global competition. Based upon the implementation of the above model, several perceptions may be important for those who may be considering implementing computer conferencing as a learning mechanism either in a middle-school, secondary-school, or post-secondary school setting.

1. Critical Thinking Development. Problem-solving is not easily accomplished by means of computer conferencing. When attempting to solve a problem, the students generally adopt different critical thinking patterns which have a tendency to interfere with the progress and pace of the debate. For example, three distinct patterns appeared to develop as a result

of the simulation. The most frequent critical thinking pattern utilized by students in this project is labeled by this researcher as surface analysis. This pattern reflects students simply perceiving the problem in its entirety and attempting to develop a position on the basis of equity (fairness) rather than through economic analysis. Another pattern identified was labeled as econometric. This pattern of thinking reflected students using either macroeconomic or microeconomic concepts for analyzing specific variables important to the problem at hand. The third group of students adopted a pattern of thinking labeled as clouded. These students basically had little idea as to how to analyze a problem situation and were simply making contributions superficially, having limited impact on the final position of the group.

The findings generally reveal that students may not be totally aware of what the process of critical thinking includes. The data collected indicates that students have a tendency to make contributions to a conference from different perspectives, often resulting in individuals not communicating with one another--but rather bypassing one another. Therefore, a barrier that arose was that the students were not making contributions based upon a common agreement for action or study. They tended to interfere with one another rather than support each other. For example, one group of students in this instance was relying upon macroeconomic policy to explain their position regarding the importance of job creation through exports while another group continually focused upon microeconomics and demand elasticity for assuring an array of choices were available for consumers in the American marketplace. Therefore, by approaching the problem from different perspectives, a degree of frustration resulted which slowed the pace of advancing the discussion to a level consistent with the demands of the task assigned.

2. Communication Styles Adopted. Students appeared to utilize a personal communication style when interacting and

not one that reflects a scholarly discussion. They have a tendency to formulate cliques within the computer conference, leaving others outside of the discussion. They quickly identify those who are helpful and those who are not. There is no attempt to act like a group but to act in subgroups. The language level of comments is approximately 9-10th grade level according to an analysis of comments by Writer's Workbench Software. The median length of the sentences was 16 words, resulting in little attention by the participants to details, including supportive documentation.

The findings indicate that students are frequently using a different communication style from that utilized in a traditional classroom. The findings also reveal that what students may be learning as part of class discussions in other aspects of the course in law or by means of the text or outside readings may not necessarily make its way into a computer conference. The incorporation of past knowledge into an electronic debate does not come easily for many participants. There appears to be a dichotomy between applying knowledge within a classroom situation where face-to-face exchanges occur and within a more impersonal electronic format where an individual's identity may not be evident. Again, this inability to converge past learning into a debate conducted as part of a computer conference appears to hinder the pace of the discussion held.

3. Student Creativity. Students generally perceive that adhering to specific guidelines and having to organize comments according to a specific structure as restricting their creativity. Having to justify a contribution by being required to include a reference to an outside reading appears to result in narrowing the discussion, resulting in the use of repetitive ideas. The repetitive contributions appear to signal a general unwillingness on the part of students to expand upon ideas and challenge one another during the debate.

It is worthy to note here that work management skills are particularly tested during a computer conference. In order to proceed at an acceptable pace, students are required to systematically make contributions, spacing their comments at intervals that allow others time to think and respond. It appears that being released from traditional class routines during a computer conference is being perceived as being the equivalent to "freedom" from all constraints, a perspective that faculty must be sensitive to as computer conferences are planned. Budgeting one's time and balancing one's effort during a computer conference with other studies in other subjects becomes more important with the elimination of that structure often associated with traditional classroom settings.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Whether to design a highly structured or unstructured experience for computer conferencing appears to be one of several questions that a classroom instructor must consider as s/he prepares students for entrance into a global network. However, because of the simplicity associated with using computer conferencing software and the ease with which one can utilize the technology associated with networking, there appears to be a great opportunity for expanding student thinking capabilities as business and consumer faculty enter a new era in teaching.

However, to utilize a computer conference for effective communication and critical thinking appears to be the challenge. The important point argued here is that the diversity of student thinking patterns and communication styles combined with a renewed emphasis upon student independence (freedom) afforded by computer networking appear to interfere with the effectiveness of computer conferencing as an authentic learning mechanism. The recommendation here is that students must receive preliminary

training that not only prepares them for using the actual software itself but also for identifying alternatives for learning how to get a group to decide the most appropriate critical thinking strategy to adopt and to determine what guidelines should be followed for submitting comments during the electronic exchanges.

With co-emulation depicting the move from individualistic competitive learning relationships to more consensual learning, and with the present availability of computer networking technology that permits extending our "human connectedness" beyond a local setting, considerable effort must now be taken by faculty to integrate student diversity into a process that enhances learning rather than stymies it. Such efforts must be K-16 and not simply geared to a select group of students. It is not the technology that must be the focal point; it is assuring that students are capable of converging varying past communication and critical thinking styles into unfamiliar operational formats expected in the future--whether at home, in school, or in the workplace. Assuming students can automatically adapt prior learning strategies, etc., to a computer-based environment by simply becoming familiar with the hardware and software itself will likely result in failure. The need is for business and consumer faculty to assume leadership in guiding students to adapt traditional learning styles to a quick-response electronic format where face-to-face communication no longer exists.

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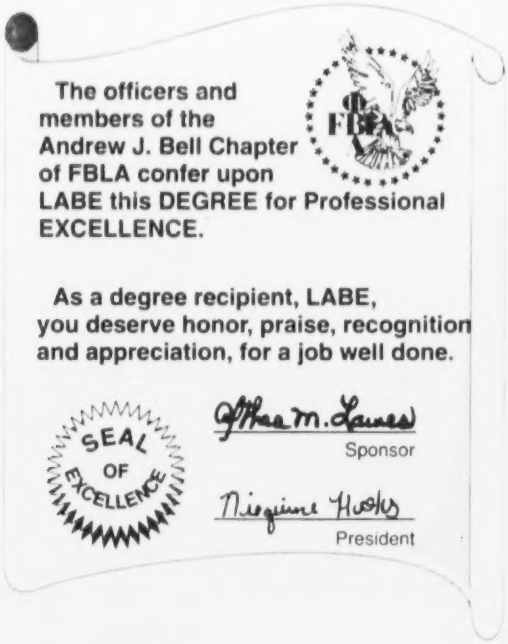
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EXPANDING BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMS: PROVIDING A SCHOOL-WITHIN-A-SCHOOL

Rita Thomas Noel

Abstract

This article describes the efforts of a North Carolina high school business teacher to expand the business education program by starting a school-within-a-school. Franchised under the National Academy Foundation (NAF), North Mecklenburg High School opened an Academy of Finance for junior and senior level students in 1991. NAF provides Academy programs with course guides, leadership training for involved teachers, and step-by-step assistance to assure program success. The model for schools-within-schools can also be applied when adding other new course offerings.

Rita Thomas Noel is an Associate Professor of Business Administration, Law and Marketing at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, North Carolina.

Sometimes dynamic change within school districts and schools themselves starts with a single individual. Leaders and change agents find innovative solutions for existing problems. The following program description features the work of one individual, Ms. Joyce Keller, a high school business teacher in Charlotte, North Carolina. Ms. Keller has successfully worked to create a new solution for integrating business and academic programs, creating a school-within-a-school.

In the fall of 1990, Ms. Keller was searching for courses that would appeal to the interests of students and faculty and that would support career development as well as integrate the academic curriculum. The local newspaper had featured several stories on the financial service industry in Charlotte; Charlotte ranked as the third largest city in the nation for providing financial services. A telephone call to the State Department of Public Instruction brought materials describing a national program called the Academy of Finance.

Learning about the Academy of Finance

The National Academy Foundation (NAF) is a non-profit foundation established in 1989 to seek out, encourage, and support partnerships between businesses, government, and public high schools. These partners pool community resources to strengthen Academies, essentially to develop a specialized school-within-an existing high school which prepares students for careers in finance, travel and tourism, public service, and the manufacturing sciences. The NAF provides current, industry-validated curricula, comprehensive staff training, including an annual Institute for Staff Development, fundraising and administrative tools, and an accessible national network for educators, business partners and students alike. There are 57 Academy of Finance programs in operation across the United States; however, the NAF also offers three other Academy programs. The success of programs relies on working partnerships between the schools and the communities in

which they operate. Existing Academies are eager to share the success of their programs.

Visiting a New York City School

In November of 1990, Ms. Keller and the assistant principal from her school, Mrs. Cheryl Pappas, went to New York City to visit with the National Academy Foundation and to visit Jamaica High School. During their visit, high school juniors and seniors in the World of Finance class made presentations on investments and justified their investment strategies. "I felt this was very unusual for business students, because they were exercising critical decision-making and communication skills not just recall or psychomotor skills," explained Ms. Keller. "Groups of seven or eight students, along with the school principal, met with us and told us about the program and about their summer internships. Students were very excited about their plans for the future. We were convinced that this program might work in our North Mecklenburg high schools. Our next step was to prepare a proposal to the NAF," stated Keller.

Creating a Proposal

A proposal prepared for the NAF describes the community and documents the need for the program. The proposal includes a budget for teachers, needed supplies and equipment, a list of textbooks, proposed expenses for staff development, and a means for disseminating information to the community.

Describing the New Program

Classes offered through the Academy of Finance are offered over a two-year period. First-year students take a year-long course in Advanced Accounting and World of Finance/Banking and Credit. Students must maintain a "C"

average in Advanced Accounting and earn passing grades in all classes. Advisory board members are involved in creating paid summer internships between the first and second year as an integral part of the Academy program.

Second-year students complete a semester course in International Finance and Financial Planning. Students attend a one-semester university course, Principles of Finance, during the second semester. On the days they are not attending the college class, students receive supportive high school classroom instruction to further reinforce the concepts being taught in the university course. At the completion of the two-year program, students receive certification in the field of finance. Members of the advisory board generally hold a special recognition ceremony to honor participants. A personal letter from the Director of the Academy accompanies the official transcript of each completing student.

Developing a Working Advisory Board

Advisory board members represent the financial services and the suppliers for the financial services industry within the community. North Mecklenburg's current advisory board consists of representatives from Allstate, Central Piedmont Community College, Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, Federal Reserve Bank, First Union National Bank, Hinrichs Financial Group, IBM, Johnson C. Smith University, Mechanics and Farmers Bank, Nations Bank, Price Waterhouse, Royal Insurance, SunGuard Trust Systems, Trans America Reinsurance, United Carolina Bank, UNC-Charlotte, and Wachovia Bank and Trust.

Members of the board with the help of teachers identify specific competencies students need to master; promote paid summer student internships; provide scholarships, job shadowing, and mentoring assistance; provide on-site visits and specialized training. Advisory board members may be asked to

fund special graduation ceremonies and awards and to help provide financial support for staff development for local teachers. The National Academy provides three national staff development meetings and board members help finance the attendance of local teachers and administrators for those meetings. Board members are also invited to attend the staff development activities and national meetings.

The NAF directly issues invitations to become an Advisory Board member. Staff members make the initial contact with identified potential advisory board members and outline board responsibilities. The size of the financial institution is not as important as its willingness to support the program. Small companies represent a wealth of information and a source of possible summer internships.

Recruiting Students

Middle school students in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, were identified as potential Academy applicants after a review of test results from the Harrington O'Shea Career Decision Making System. Results of the test create a student profile providing occupational, interest-centered information for facilitating career decision-making for youth and adults. Potential Academy applicants were students who scored significantly above average in data analysis and in business. Student scores on math and reading were also used as a basis for assuring student success in the university finance course that was to be included in the second year of the program. Any achievement test results, however, can be used to identify potential Academy candidates.

The Academy director also visited the sophomore English classes to describe the Academy program and its potential employment opportunities and to recruit new students. Applicants for the program submitted two letters of recommendation from former teachers and successfully

completed a personal interview with the program director. Based on academic performance, interest in the program, and a pledge to complete the two-year program, 17 students were selected for the first-year program at North Mecklenburg High School. Each received a personal letter of acceptance.

Beginning the Program

Academy of Finance programs officially opened at North Mecklenburg High School (NMHS) and at Garinger High School in the Fall of 1991. Ms. Joyce Keller was named the director for North Mecklenburg High School, and Mrs. Barbara Tull was named director for Garinger High School.

At NMHS, the courses taught the first year were World of Finance/Banking and Credit, and Advanced Accounting I. After documenting course content with district administration, the Advanced Accounting class received advanced credit, adding an additional point toward students' high school cumulative grade point average. No other business courses were required as prerequisite courses for the program.

Academy courses were taught first and second period at NMHS. The director worked during the remaining part of the school day developing the program and working with the advisory board.

Involving Teachers

Faculty members who were teaching classes in which Academy students were enrolled were asked to form a teacher's advisory board to discuss student accomplishments and problems. A participating teacher's advice was sought early for resolving any program or student problem.

Developing the Parent's Advisory Board

Parents, too, are very much involved in tracking Academy student success. Not all parents serve on the Parents' Advisory Board; parents are selected who will represent a cross section of all Academy students. Parents provide input from yet another perspective and may also act as a resource for one-on-one teaching or to bring work experiences into the classroom. At North Mecklenburg High School, the Parents' Board met with all parents four times during the year to plan their own program. Often, the meeting became a covered dish dinner meeting allowing for social interaction as well as program input. (A Parents' Advisory Board is an excellent suggestion for any business program, not limited to use with just Academy programs. Such a board could be a real aid in providing needed support and parent input.)

Conferencing with Parents

The Academy director conducted parent conferences at the end of each nine week grading period. Conference scheduling was based on convenience for parents (which meant some were held during the lunch period, some before and after school, and some in the evening). Parents had an opportunity to discuss course content, grades, and individual student progress and were encouraged to provide input into the program.

Summer Internships

During the first summer of the NMHS Academy of Finance program, 15 of the 17 original first-year students were placed in paid summer internships within the financial services industry. On-the-job training included a healthy dose of humor as students learned to laugh at their own mistakes, yet learned

to appreciate the ties between classroom instruction and real world experience.

Visibility in the Community

Community support was a vital link in the success of the Academy program. Program information was regularly provided to local newspapers. When the program began, a press conference was held for the official signing of the contract between school administrators and the Executive Director of the Academy of Finance. Television coverage for the official signing included an on-site visit by TV cameramen who filmed school board members, advisory board members, and other school administrators. Newspaper articles emphasized the new curriculum and featured the 17 students who had been accepted into the Academy program for the following year.

IBM invited first year Academy students to corporate offices, treating students as banking executives and introducing them to specialized banking computer systems in a half-day training session. IBM featured the students in their in-house publication providing the program with additional visibility and publicity.

Students also visited First Union's stock market operations. While visiting the bank, selected students were photographed and featured by the bank in their in-house magazine.

Beginning the Second Year

In 1992, 14 continuing students entered the second year of the program which included the following courses: International Finance, Financial Planning, and the university class, "Principles of Finance." Another 16 new students entered the Academy and began their first-year program.

Thirty students were officially members of the Academy of Finance at NMHS in the fall of 1992.

The Accredited College Class

Part of the NAF requirements is to provide students with an opportunity to enroll in a university finance course, taught on a university campus, during the second year of the program. Students are given advanced placement credit toward their high school graduation and also receive regular college credit. The experience with a university class should help students make a smoother transition from high school to college. Familiarizing students with teaching methods used at the university and with the pacing and self-direction of the university routine should help reduce freshman stress and anxiety the following year.

The high school Academy instructor also attends the university class to help reinforce student learning through additional high school instruction. (Legally, attendance of the high school teacher is necessary because the high school provides student transportation to the university.)

For the Academy's program, the local university agreed to provide an instructor and the accredited class, which limited enrollment to NMHS and Garinger high school students, on the university campus from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m., M-W-F, for one semester. Students met at the high school and rode an activity bus to the university, returning to the high school in time for their second-period class.

Integrating Non-Vocational Courses

Most of the Academy students were enrolled in the same history class due to the results of natural attrition. One day as the history teacher and the Academy director were visiting together the director casually asked, "What are you

teaching them?" "The different types of business organizations," the history teacher replied. "They already know that," the director informed him. "Well then, let's see if we can come up with another project for them." This conversation resulted in a project that allowed the Academy students to prepare a presentation on types of business organizations, to perfect their oral speaking skills and presentation skills in the business classroom, and to present to the entire history class a professional presentation using both acquired business knowledge and improved presentation skills. As a result, every nine weeks a new joint project is now planned for integrating the curriculum between the academy students and the U.S. history class.

Another opportunity for integration occurred during one of the first assignments in the university finance class. Students were asked to develop their educational, professional, and personal goals and to print these goals using a laser printer. The assignment was given on Friday and it was due at 7:30 a.m. on Monday. Due to the forced scheduling of Academy students during first and second period, most of the students were also enrolled in the same English class. For this assignment, the English teacher reviewed their drafted goals and required revisions until the goals were mechanically and grammatically correct. Students printed their goals, using the laser printer in the business classroom. The cooperative efforts of two high school teachers resulted in a successful first assignment for Academy students.

Many other opportunities for integrating non-vocational and Academy courses readily present themselves. Math, economics, English, foreign languages, and current events classes could all be used to integrate course assignments. Even an art history class could provide information for an assignment that considers investments in rare and precious art work.

Benefitting from the Academy

Academy students participated in AT&T's Investment Game where high school teams across the state selected stocks for investment potential and calculated their rate of gain or loss over a ten-week period. Three of the teams from NMHS's Academy program finished first, fifth, and seventh for the state of North Carolina.

As the first Academy of Finance students at NMHS completed their two-year course, students received between $35,000-40,000 in scholarships. Two of those scholarships came from the Advisory Board: one for $1,000 and one for $500. All 14 students from NMHS were accepted into college or university programs.

Continuing Success

Sophomores became a part of the Academy program in the fall of 1993, through the Tech Prep program at NMHS. Tech Prep allows for early identification of a major as early as the sophomore year. Sophomores then enrolled in Advanced Accounting I and Computer Applications. The Advisory board encouraged and endorsed including sophomores in the program.

Lessons Learned

The school-within-a-school concept provides a way to integrate with academic subjects; but even more importantly, it supports a sense of closeness and bonding for participating students, parents, and teachers. Students become involved with the welfare of all of the members of the Academy because of the increased interaction and the scheduling of Academy classes which affect the entire day's schedule. Director Keller indicates, "Students have felt a sense of honor at belonging to the group. It is an interdisciplinary program

that will cross all boundary lines within the school within the next five years. It is a school honorship program---we want the whole faculty to feel a part of the program, to be aware of what goes on within the program, and to be supportive through participation on the teacher advisory board."

The new, academically in-depth finance courses offer teachers an opportunity for professional growth and development. Interaction with community members and members of the advisory board brings fresh excitement and relevancy to the high school classroom.

Ms. Keller offers the following advice for would-be new program initiators:

> "New programs need the support of school administrators. Of particular importance is the high school principal. His or her continued support is necessary to develop a new program with the magnitude and depth of the Academy of Finance. Support for class scheduling and the scheduling of teacher planning periods is imperative to assure program success."

Guiding Principles for New Courses

Local area needs can guide the development of school-with-a-school programs. The financial services industry represents only one specialty area. Teachers might also consider developing a program centered around tourism, health care, environmental agencies, or public services. Entire schools have developed curriculum around the arts, math and science, skilled technological programs, or college preparatory curriculum. Business educators should seize the opportunity to develop programs that will help local employment needs and provide students with a curriculum that allows specialization with an introduction to career positions. Teachers must be

eclectic--using the parts of the Academy program that fit their own students and their own local employment needs. Business teachers are encouraged to use the experiences of Ms. Keller and others in Academy programs to launch new initiatives to bring life and interest to expanding business education programs.

Contact the following people for additional information:

National Academy Foundation, 235 Park Avenue South, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10003, 212-420-8400.

Ms. Joyce Keller, North Mecklenburg High School, 11201 Old Statesville Road, Huntersville, NC 28078, 704-343-3840.

Mrs. Barbara Tull, Garinger High School, 1100 Eastway Drive, Charlotte, NC 28205, 704-343-6450.

Dr. Rita Noel, Western Carolina University, College of Business, Cullowhee, NC 28723, 704-227-7401.

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